



TIME

The New American Revolution

VISIONS OF A BLACK FUTURE THAT FULFILL A NATION'S PROMISE

BY PHARRELL WILLIAMS

WITH KENYA BARRIS, ANGELA DAVIS,
IMARA JONES, NAOMI OSAKA, YARA SHAHIDI,
TYLER, THE CREATOR & MORE

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Artwork by Nneka Jones
for TIME



Cover

America As It Should Be

The artist and producer **Pharrell Williams** curated a series of conversations between Black leaders on how America can fulfill the promise of its principles, with perspectives from Angela Davis; Tyler, the Creator; Naomi Osaka; Michael Harriot; and more **74**



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Conversation



WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT ...

THE PLAGUE ELECTION Tim O'Brien's cover art for the Aug. 17/Aug. 24 issue, which accompanied Molly Ball's story about the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the 2020 election, was a hit on Twitter. User @tracychapmanfa1 tweeted that O'Brien is "a master," while @RobinMcMee said it was one of TIME's "best covers ever."

Other Twitter users, including @pattypan and @robertstark79, thought the cover came at the President from too far left. But Kathleen K. Carfagno of Glen Mills, Pa., quipped that when she got to the last paragraph of the article, which ponders a future in which Americans "look back on this plague," it took her "a nanosecond to realize [Ball] was referring to the pandemic and not the current Administration."

'There have been so many great TIME covers during the Trump regime.'

@COLLEENKENNEALY, on Twitter

PORTER SCHOOLS CONGRESS In the same issue, Abby Vesoulis' profile of California Congresswoman Katie Porter appealed to readers far beyond the Golden State. The Rev. George Durham of Statesboro, Ga., was "encouraged by her integrity and grit in calling for accountability and reform," and Sally Bowman of Felton, Del., argued there'd be less

waste if more members of Congress were like Porter. Likewise, Joseph D. Wu of Wharton, N.J., called for Katie Porters at local and state levels too. Responding to the detail that Porter folded her kids' laundry during the interview,

'I want my daughter to be like her when she grows up!'

SANJUANA LE, Emporia, Kans.

Cherry Shiflet of Tuscola, Texas, quipped that the kids should do that chore, so Porter can "enjoy a few more 'moments of silence.'"



New music

Alongside his curation of conversations with Black leaders (starting on page 74 in this issue), Pharrell Williams is premiering a new song: "Entrepreneur," featuring Jay-Z. He tells TIME that he hopes the track raises awareness of the challenges faced by minority-owned businesses and inspires more collaboration among entrepreneurs of color—leading in turn to "more money and more opportunity for everyone." Listen and learn more at time.com/pharrell-new-song

BEHIND THE COVER The unfinished American flag featured on this issue's cover is embroidery on canvas, representing both a nation working to fulfill its ideals and Black leaders "looking up to a very optimistic future," says artist Nneka Jones, 23. Read more about the work at time.com/flag-cover



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PROGRAMMING NOTE ▶ This is a special issue that will be on sale for three weeks. The next issue of TIME will be published on Sept. 10 and available on newsstands on Sept. 11.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ▶ In the Aug. 17/Aug. 24 story about the future of American policing, we misstated when Joseph Wysocki became police chief in Camden, N.J. It was in 2019.

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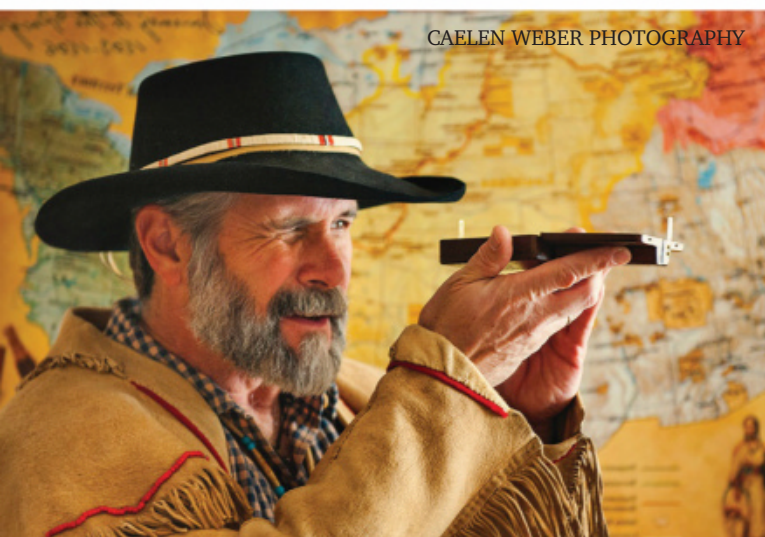


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'I will never give up.'

ABDULLAHI MOHAMED NOR, Somali parliament member and owner of the Elite Hotel in Mogadishu, pledging to continue investing in the country, in an Aug. 16 tweet; Nor was rescued from the hotel following a terrorist attack by al-Shabab militants

'He simply cannot be who we need him to be for us. It is what it is.'

MICHELLE OBAMA, former U.S. First Lady, speaking about President Donald Trump—and echoing his earlier statement about U.S. COVID-19 deaths—in a keynote address on the first night of the virtual Democratic National Convention on Aug. 17

'THE CURRENT DATA PRESENTS AN UNTENABLE SITUATION.'

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL ADMINISTRATORS, in an Aug. 17 letter to students saying the school would cancel in-person instruction for undergraduates, after 130 students tested positive for COVID-19 within one week of the start of classes

'I'm going to take a very good look at it.'

DONALD TRUMP, U.S. President, raising the possibility Aug. 15 of a pardon for former NSA contractor Edward Snowden; Trump had previously called Snowden "a spy who should be executed"

'Before any evidence, they just claimed and presumed that I'm guilty.'

JIMMY LAI, Hong Kong media mogul, in an Aug. 14 interview; Lai was arrested earlier in the month under the territory's restrictive new national-security law



130°F

Observed temperature in California's Death Valley on Aug. 16; if officially verified, it would be the hottest temperature recorded anywhere on Earth since 1913



GOOD NEWS
of the week

Officials at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., confirmed Aug. 17 that giant panda Mei Xiang was pregnant; viewership on the zoo's panda cam increased by 800%



1.116 million

Number of barrels of Venezuela-bound petroleum confiscated by U.S. authorities in the largest ever seizure of fuel from Iran, according to a Justice Department announcement Aug. 14

The Brief



STRIKE A DEAL
The White House
hopes a plan
to normalize
relations
between Israel
and the UAE pays
off at home too

INSIDE

PROTESTS IN THAILAND ROIL
ROYALS AND GOVERNMENT

COVID-19 TEST DELAYS PERSIST
AMID CHAOS ACROSS U.S. LABS

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION OKAYS
DRILLING IN ARCTIC REFUGE

PHOTOGRAPH BY KOBI WOLF

The Brief is reported by Alejandro de la Garza, Mélissa Godin, Suyin Haynes, Anna Purna Kambhampaty, Ciara Nugent, Billy Perrigo, Madeline Roache and Olivia B. Waxman

DIPLOMACY

A deal for Israel and the UAE—and voters

By Kimberly Dozier

DONALD TRUMP'S BROKERING OF A LANDMARK deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates could not have come at a better time for the President. With less than three months to go before Nov. 3, the agreement to normalize relations delivers Trump's flagging re-election campaign a much needed foreign policy win—and a chance to woo back disgruntled Christian and Jewish voters in the final weeks of the race.

Under the "Abraham Accord," in exchange for Israel's suspending controversial plans to annex West Bank territory, the UAE has pledged to move toward diplomatic recognition of the Jewish state. That would make it only the third Arab nation after Egypt and Jordan to do so since Israel's founding in 1948. Though the deal isn't yet done and has already been broadly condemned by Iran, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority, the Administration hopes that other Middle Eastern countries will follow the UAE's move—and that U.S. voters may find their minds changed as well.

The deal was a well-timed Trumpian riposte to years of criticism of his foundering Middle East policy. The Palestinians have refused to consider the Middle East peace plan of Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, and while the Administration's maximum-pressure campaign on Iran has decimated the country's economy, it has failed to force Tehran to renegotiate the six-nation nuclear deal. Worse, it spurred Tehran to restart its nuclear-enrichment program.

Administration officials now say that the same maximum-pressure tactic is just what enabled a diplomatic opening, by winning back the trust of Gulf nations that perceive Iran as a common adversary. "The international community is full of armchair Arabists who think they know what's best for the region, and they love to talk," says U.S. Iran envoy Brian Hook. "We listened."

The deal offers the White House a chance to highlight the campaign promises it kept that helped deliver the accord. In December 2017, the Administration recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and later moved the U.S. embassy there, despite Palestinian claims to the city's eastern sector. Months later, the Administration recognized Israel's contested 1981 annexation of the Golan Heights. Though considered third rails by previous Administrations, those moves were key to starting

conversations between Israel and several Gulf states, two senior Administration officials say, signaling that the U.S. would insist that its international partners work with Israel too.

The two officials now hope to see other Arab nations follow the UAE's lead, a possible pre-election gift to the Trump Administration for its anti-Iran policy. "You can bet your life," says one of the officials, "that Bahrain, Oman and Morocco are looking left and right and listening" for regional blowback. Saudi Arabia may do the same next year after watching these test cases, they say, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations.

TRUMP'S CAMPAIGN HOPES the President's evangelical and Jewish supporters, unnerved by his handling of COVID-19 and the subsequent economic crisis, are watching too. "It reinforces to social conservatives why they took the risk on Donald Trump and why that risk ultimately paid off," says a senior Trump campaign adviser and confidant, speaking anonymously to discuss campaign strategy. It also reinforces to conservative Jewish voters that they "have a strong supporter in the White House," he says.

Some evangelicals fear the pandemic is a sign that "things had gone awry spiritually" for the Administration, says Mark Tooley, editor of the foreign-policy-focused Christian journal *Providence*. A July Pew Research poll showed white evangelical support for Trump has fallen, though 8 in 10 say they'd still vote for him. This diplomatic breakthrough might convince "some who were tottering on the edge" that "God's blessing remains," Tooley says.

The deal also cements Trump's hold on at least part of the Jewish vote, says a major Jewish donor who spoke on condition of anonymity. Most Jewish voters traditionally vote Democratic, as opposed to the conservative Jews who make up Trump's base, he says, but having one fewer Arab country as Israel's enemy is "a real feather in his cap with the Jewish voters."

Democratic strategist Joel Rubin agrees it will be welcomed by many—if it delivers peace in the region. "We are happy that Israel is getting a win, but if it means less prospects for peace with Palestinians and more opportunities for confrontation with Iran, we're not happy," says Rubin. "We want it to be the pedestal to more peace, not the gateway to more conflict."

Trump is bullish that he may yet get one more elusive win out of the deal. Administration officials are confident that Iran, seeing its adversaries coalesce, can be backed into a corner on negotiating its nuclear program. On Aug. 17, the President punctuated that point in a Wisconsin campaign speech: "If we win, and when we win, we're going to have a deal with Iran immediately." □

'I don't think anybody else could have done it.'

DONALD TRUMP,
U.S. President, speaking
on Aug. 13 about the
White House team's role
in negotiating the deal





DISASTER ZONE Grain bins in Luther, Iowa, crumpled like tinfoil when a powerful storm system, known as a derecho, pounded the Midwest on Aug. 10, killing at least four people and leaving nearly 2 million without power. In Iowa, the hardest-hit state, where the storm left more than a thousand people without a home and wrecked 13 million acres of corn, Governor Kim Reynolds drew criticism for being slow to respond; she has since requested nearly \$4 billion in federal disaster aid.

THE BULLETIN

Thai protesters take on a once untouchable monarchy

WHEN THAILAND'S ABSENTEE SOVEREIGN, King Maha Vajiralongkorn, visited Bangkok in April, the hashtag #WhyDoWeNeedAKing exploded on Twitter. The sentiment has since leaped from social media and private conversations into an unprecedented realm for the country: pro-democracy protests, with an estimated 10,000 demonstrators joining a rally on Aug. 16. "This [has] never happened before," says Pavin Chachavalpongpun, a Thai academic self-exiled in Japan.

BREAKING TABOOS Since taking the throne in 2016, King Vajiralongkorn has consolidated military and financial power and endorsed the military-backed government. In Thailand, insulting the royal family risks prison terms of up to 15 years. Authorities have tried, unsuccessfully, to pressure rally organizers to steer clear of the hallowed institution. At the Aug. 16 rally, human-rights lawyer Arnon Nampa—one of two activists facing so-called lèse-majesté complaints—said "the biggest dream" was to make the monarchy more accountable. "We will keep dreaming," he told the crowd at Bangkok's Democracy Monument.

DEMANDING DEMOCRACY Mostly student-led, the protests have gained momentum since emerging in July. Grievances include the disappearance of overseas dissidents, the lack of LGBTQ rights and the ongoing rule of Prayuth Chan-ocha, the 2014 coup leader turned Prime Minister. Uniting protesters is the belief that Thailand, long wracked by political upheaval, needs genuine democracy. Some have gone further, believing "if they don't address the question of the monarchy, then Thailand will continue to be stuck in this loop of pseudo-reform," says Sunai Phasuk, a researcher at Human Rights Watch.

WHAT NEXT At school assemblies in mid-August, students as young as 12 were seen flashing an unofficial protest symbol. Still, not everyone embraces the calls to check the monarchy's power. Some worry it could threaten the movement's overarching pro-democracy goals. While previous Thai protests have been crushed with force, authorities are now mostly going after prominent activists. That tactic, experts say, is only swelling the protesters' ranks—meaning more visibility now and more risk of a bigger confrontation later. —LAIGNEE BARRON

NEWS TICKER

Police arrest ship captain over oil spill

The captain of a fuel carrier that ran aground on a coral reef off the coast of Mauritius in July, **spilling about 1,000 metric tons of oil**, was arrested on Aug. 17. Police in the island nation said Sunil Kumar Nandeshwar, 58, was charged with "endangering safe navigation."

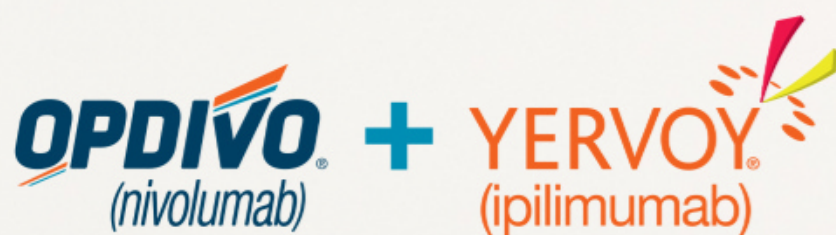
Georgia gov drops Atlanta lawsuit

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp withdrew a lawsuit Aug. 13 that had sought to block Atlanta's COVID-19 restrictions and mask mandate. Kemp later issued an executive order **limiting local mask requirements to government property** to "protect Georgia businesses from government overreach."

Ground zero for COVID-19 holds festival

Wuhan, the Chinese city **where COVID-19 first emerged in December, hosted an outdoor music festival in a water park** on Aug. 15. Images showed thousands of maskless revelers packed close together. Wuhan was under a strict lockdown from January to April and has recorded no domestic transmissions of the virus since May.

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Indication & Important Safety Information for OPDIVO (nivolumab) + YERVOY (ipilimumab)

Only your healthcare professional knows the specifics of your condition and how OPDIVO in combination with YERVOY may fit into your overall therapy. The information below does not take the place of talking with your healthcare professional, so talk to them if you have any questions.

What are OPDIVO and YERVOY?

OPDIVO and YERVOY are prescription medicines used to treat people with a type of advanced stage lung cancer called non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). OPDIVO may be used in combination with YERVOY as your first treatment for NSCLC when your lung cancer has spread to other parts of your body (metastatic), **and** your tumors are positive for PD-L1, but do not have an abnormal EGFR or ALK gene.

It is not known if OPDIVO and YERVOY are safe and effective when used in children younger than 18 years of age.

What is the most important information I should know about OPDIVO and YERVOY?

OPDIVO and YERVOY are medicines that may treat certain cancers by working with your immune system. OPDIVO and YERVOY can cause your immune system to attack normal organs and tissues in any area of your body and can affect the way they work. These problems can sometimes become serious or life-threatening and can lead to death and may happen anytime during treatment or even after your treatment has ended. Some of these problems may happen more often when OPDIVO is used in combination with YERVOY.

YERVOY can cause serious side effects in many parts of your body which can lead to death. These problems may happen anytime during treatment with YERVOY or after you have completed treatment.

Call or see your healthcare provider right away if you develop any symptoms of the following problems or these symptoms get worse. Do not try to treat symptoms yourself.

- **Lung problems (pneumonitis).** Symptoms of pneumonitis may include: new or worsening cough; chest pain; shortness of breath

- **Intestinal problems (colitis) that can lead to tears or holes in your intestine.** Signs and symptoms of colitis may include: diarrhea (loose stools) or more bowel movements than usual; mucus or blood in your stools or dark, tarry, sticky stools; stomach-area (abdomen) pain or tenderness; you may or may not have fever
- **Liver problems (hepatitis) that can lead to liver failure.** Signs and symptoms of hepatitis may include: yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes; nausea or vomiting; pain on the right side of your stomach area (abdomen); drowsiness; dark urine (tea colored); bleeding or bruising more easily than normal; feeling less hungry than usual; decreased energy
- **Hormone gland problems (especially the thyroid, pituitary, and adrenal glands; and pancreas).** Signs and symptoms that your hormone glands are not working properly may include: headaches that will not go away or unusual headaches; extreme tiredness or unusual sluggishness; weight gain or weight loss; dizziness or fainting; changes in mood or behavior, such as decreased sex drive, irritability, or forgetfulness; hair loss; feeling cold; constipation; voice gets deeper; excessive thirst or lots of urine
- **Kidney problems, including nephritis and kidney failure.** Signs of kidney problems may include: decrease in the amount of urine; blood in your urine; swelling in your ankles; loss of appetite
- **Skin problems.** Signs of these problems may include: skin rash with or without itching; itching; skin blistering or peeling; sores or ulcers in mouth or other mucous membranes
- **Inflammation of the brain (encephalitis).** Signs and symptoms of encephalitis may include: headache; fever; tiredness or weakness; confusion; memory problems; sleepiness; seeing or hearing things that are not really there (hallucinations); seizures; stiff neck
- **Problems in other organs.** Signs of these problems may include: changes in eyesight; severe or persistent muscle or joint pains; severe muscle weakness; chest pain

Additional serious side effects observed during a separate study of YERVOY alone include:

- **Nerve problems that can lead to paralysis.** Symptoms of nerve problems may include: unusual weakness of legs, arms, or face; numbness or tingling in hands or feet



Talk to your doctor about OPDIVO + YERVOY

www.OPDIVOYERVOY.com 1-855-OPDIVOYERVOY

- **Eye problems.** Symptoms may include: blurry vision, double vision, or other vision problems; eye pain or redness

Get medical help immediately if you develop any of these symptoms or they get worse. It may keep these problems from becoming more serious. Your healthcare team will check you for side effects during treatment and may treat you with corticosteroid or hormone replacement medicines. If you have a serious side effect, your healthcare team may also need to delay or completely stop your treatment with OPDIVO and YERVOY.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before receiving OPDIVO and YERVOY? Before you receive OPDIVO and YERVOY, tell your healthcare provider if you: have immune system problems (autoimmune disease) such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, lupus, or sarcoidosis; have had an organ transplant; have lung or breathing problems; have liver problems; have any other medical conditions; are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. OPDIVO and YERVOY can harm your unborn baby. **Females who are able to become pregnant:** Your healthcare provider should do a pregnancy test before you start receiving OPDIVO and YERVOY.

- You should use an effective method of birth control during and for at least 5 months after the last dose. Talk to your healthcare provider about birth control methods that you can use during this time.
- Tell your healthcare provider right away if you become pregnant or think you are pregnant during treatment. You or your healthcare provider should contact Bristol Myers Squibb at 1-800-721-5072 as soon as you become aware of the pregnancy.
- **Pregnancy Safety Surveillance Study:** Females who become pregnant during treatment with YERVOY are encouraged to enroll in a Pregnancy Safety Surveillance Study. The purpose of this study is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. You or your healthcare provider can enroll in the Pregnancy Safety Surveillance Study by calling 1-844-593-7869.

If you are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed: It is not known if OPDIVO or YERVOY passes into your breast milk. **Do not** breastfeed during treatment and for 5 months after the last dose.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare providers and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

What are the possible side effects of OPDIVO and YERVOY?

OPDIVO and YERVOY can cause serious side effects, including:

- **See "What is the most important information I should know about OPDIVO and YERVOY?"**
- **Severe infusion reactions.** Tell your doctor or nurse right away if you get these symptoms during an infusion of OPDIVO or YERVOY: chills or shaking; itching or rash; flushing; difficulty breathing; dizziness; fever; feeling like passing out

The most common side effects of OPDIVO when used in combination with YERVOY include: feeling tired; diarrhea; rash; itching; nausea; pain in muscles, bones, and joints; fever; cough; decreased appetite; vomiting; stomach-area (abdominal) pain; shortness of breath; upper respiratory tract infection; headache; low thyroid hormone levels (hypothyroidism); decreased weight; dizziness.

These are not all the possible side effects of OPDIVO and YERVOY. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

OPDIVO (10 mg/mL) and YERVOY (5 mg/mL) are injections for intravenous (IV) use.

This is a brief summary of the most important information about OPDIVO and YERVOY. For more information, talk with your healthcare provider, call 1-855-673-4861, or go to www.OPDIVO.com.

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NEWS TICKER

P.R. governor defeated in primary

After a chaotic election, Puerto Rico Governor Wanda Vázquez **conceded defeat** on Aug. 16 to Pedro Pierluisi in the New Progressive Party primary. Pierluisi was briefly governor after former governor Ricardo Rosselló resigned last year, before the Puerto Rico supreme court installed Vázquez.

U.K. officials retreat over exams outcry

The British government said Aug. 17 it would **scrap the system it set up to assign grades to students in England who couldn't take exams because of COVID-19**. Thousands had their predicted scores lowered according to an algorithm that relied partly on their school's past performance, prompting anger over unfairness.

Wildfire emergency in California

California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency on Aug. 18, citing wildfires and "continued dangerous weather conditions." A record heat wave in California is contributing to nearly 30 wildfires, which had burned **more than 120,000 acres across the state** as of the day of the declaration.

GOOD QUESTION

Why are COVID-19 test results still taking so long?

A GRAD STUDENT IN FLORIDA WAITED 11 days. Positive. A 14-year-old in California waited 24 days. Negative. When a New York writer took to social media, it had been four days with no word. As the U.S. struggles with COVID-19, people across the country are using Twitter to point out the absurdity of receiving results so stale they seem pointless.

Testing is crucial to containment, but one July study found it's only really useful when results are available in a day or two. Meanwhile, Department of Health and Human Services data show that in July, only 45% of lab tests were completed in three days or less. When TIME set out to map average test-result wait times across the country, we found that wait times are a product not just of geography but also of a messy system of labs and agencies. The chaos is all but impossible to neatly map, and examining the problem makes clear just how hard it will be to solve.

Early in the pandemic, COVID-19 tests were sent from hospitals to the public labs that serve as the first line of defense in an outbreak. But those are small operations, and commercial labs soon jumped in to take on some of the load. By now, roughly half of the more than 700,000 samples taken daily are routed to 12 major commercial laboratories, which have processed some 30 million tests since the end of February.

Even so, the system as a whole wasn't ready for such an unprecedented ramp-up. Addressing the shortages of nasal swabs, reagents, trained lab personnel and testing machines has been a game of whack-a-mole. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is working with states in an attempt to allocate resources as needed. But because the national stockpiles have run dry, FEMA is buying supplies from the same vendors as the labs, creating extra competition.

"It's *The Hunger Games* for laboratories," says Rachael Liesman, director of microbiology at the University of Kansas Hospital. "If we get our supplies, then we can operate, and if we can't, it grinds to a halt."

Furthermore, U.S. labs are not set up to easily collaborate, making it hard to predict the next bottleneck. Nada Sanders, a professor of supply-chain management at Northeastern University, says that without a national body to oversee the moving parts, every stage of the U.S. testing system will continue to be overwhelmed. "It's extraordinarily uncoordinated," says Sanders. "We completely left it up to the open markets. When we talk about public health, that's not something you leave to the forces of the free market."

In the first week of August, the crush of tests did drop—but that's not exactly reassuring. With some 50,000 new cases being reported nationwide each day, testing fell 9.1% compared with the week before. That's evidence the delays may be having the consequence health experts fear most: with results so held up, some people are deciding it's not worth getting tested at all. —EMILY BARONE



MEDICINE

Body of evidence

When a **piece of a Lego arm** fell out of a 7-year-old boy's nose in New Zealand on Aug. 16, two whole years had passed since he'd pushed it up there. Here, other internal objects. —Ciara Nugent

HOLE IN THE HEAD

A Russian man in his 30s reported hearing loss in 2018—and for good reason: surgeons removed a 2-in. nail from his skull. It had become lodged there in a home-renovation accident a few years earlier, which he said he'd forgotten as he'd been drunk at the time.

BRACE POSITION

After a 30-year-old Australian woman had intense stomach pains in 2017, doctors found a 2.5-in. piece of metal wire lodged in her intestine—part of her dental braces, removed a decade before. She hadn't noticed swallowing the wire or felt any earlier side effects.

HELLO OLD FRIEND

In 2011, a CT scan revealed a felt-tip pen in the stomach of a 76-year-old woman in southern England. She had swallowed it 25 years earlier while trying to look at her tonsils in the mirror. When doctors removed the pen, they found it still worked and used it to write "hello."

DIED

Robert Trump, brother of President Donald Trump, on Aug. 15 at 71.

RELEASED

A nearly 1,000-page report by the Republican-led Senate Intelligence Committee on **Russian interference in the 2016 election**, on Aug. 18. It called the Trump campaign's contact with Russian officials a "grave" counterintelligence threat.

RESIGNED

Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, on Aug. 18, after being arrested in a coup that followed months of demonstrations.

CONVICTED

Hizballah member **Salim Ayyash**, of involvement in the 2005 car bombing that killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, by a U.N.-backed court on Aug. 18.

HIRED

Jason Wright, by the Washington Football Team, as the first Black NFL team president, on Aug. 17.

PARDONED

Suffragist **Susan B. Anthony**, for illegally voting in 1872, by President Trump, on Aug. 18, the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

REPORTED

That more than **15% of mortgages** insured by the Federal Housing Administration are delinquent, by the Mortgage Bankers Association on Aug. 17.

DIED

Luchita Hurtado

All-embracing artist

By Hans Ulrich Obrist

LUCHITA HURTADO AND I MET IN EARLY 2017 AND SOON AFTER started to collaborate on an exhibition of her work for the Serpentine Galleries. My memories of her are ones of endless revelation. It was an incredibly intense dialogue. Each time we would speak, a new dimension of Luchita would become visible—the painting, the drawing, the photography, the poetry, the fashion.

Luchita—who died Aug. 13, just months before her 100th birthday and only about a year after the opening of that show, her first international retrospective—connected in a holistic way to the natural world. She explored ecology in her painting and lived it in terms of not buying clothes but rather designing them herself. "We are a species, just like the dinosaurs, and just like the dinosaurs we are not in charge of the world like we seem to want to be. We have to think of all the living things in this world as our relatives," she once told me. "Sometimes now I find myself touching trees and communicating with them, feeling that they're feeling what I'm feeling. I talk to them, saying how beautiful they are and how sorry I am that they need water and I haven't got any."

In a lot of ways, Luchita showed us that we need to consider a more expansive understanding of life—not just from the short-term perspective of the clock but from the long-term perspective of the cyclical nature of time. —As told to ANNA PURNA KAMBHAMPATY

Obrist is the artistic director of the Serpentine Galleries



Hurtado at London's Serpentine Gallery last year



Caribou in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in 2019

OPENED

Arctic reserve, for oil drilling

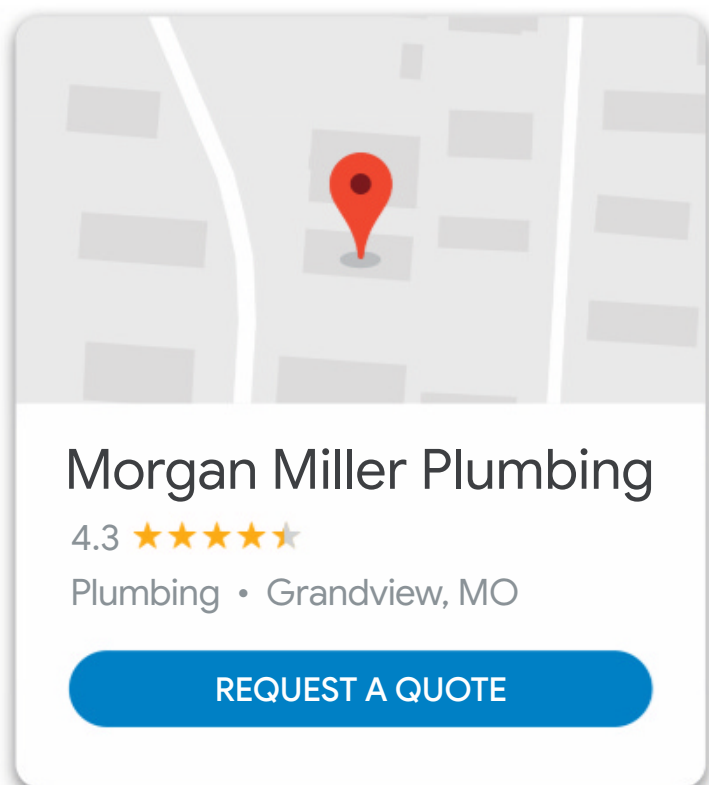
FOR DECADES, OIL COMPANIES have battled environmentalists for the right to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), a nature preserve nearly the size of South Carolina. It's the largest swath of land virtually untouched by humans in the U.S., and environmentalists say drilling on even a small part of it will hinder wildlife migration. Activists focused on climate change have also said opening the land for drilling increases the risks of unchecked warming.

But on Aug. 17, Trump Administration officials handed those activists a loss, saying the area had been cleared for oil drilling. "ANWR is a big deal that Ronald Reagan couldn't get done," President Trump told *Fox & Friends*.

Ultimately, however, the future of ANWR may not be determined by the White House or the environmentalists. Several large banks say they won't finance drilling there, and many analysts say oil demand may never recover fully from its historic decline amid COVID-19—a sign the drilling news isn't the only way America's relationship to oil is changing.

—JUSTIN WORLAND

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New technology expands access, turning patients' bedrooms into 'hospitals'

By Abigail Abrams

WHEN CURTIS CARLSON STARTED HAVING BACK PAIN THIS spring, he put off seeing a doctor. His job at a transitional-housing organization in Ukiah, Calif., was busier than ever amid the economic collapse, COVID-19 was raging, and a hospital seemed like the last place he wanted to be.

But when he finally took himself to the emergency room and was diagnosed with a kidney infection, Carlson figured he'd have no choice but to stay. Instead, his doctors told him about a new program that would allow him to finish the rest of his hospital care at home, with a medical team monitoring him virtually around the clock and making in-person visits multiple times each day.

"I was blown away," says Carlson, 49. When it became clear that staff would set up all the necessary equipment on a TV tray in Carlson's home, and that he'd be able to communicate with his medical team via iPad, he was on board. "It was

'COVID-19 changed everything when it comes to telemedicine services. The genie's not going back in the bottle.'

DR. KAREN RHEUBAN,
University of Virginia
Center for Telehealth

easy enough that I could use it, which was awesome," says Carlson, who says he's "terrible" at technology.

Carlson's experience was revolutionary, he says. After one night in a real hospital, he was back at home with his wife and their four sons. "The biggest part for me was when I got home, seeing the look of relief on my 7-year-old's face," Carlson says. "He was definitely very happy Dad was home."

Hospital administrators at Adventist Health, the system that runs the Ukiah hospital where Carlson went for care, had been looking for ways to reach rural patients for years. But when COVID-19 arrived in California this spring, that timeline collapsed. By May, Adventist Health had the infrastructure to offer remote hospital care to 200 patients.

Adventist is not alone in its warp-speed embrace of new tech. In recent months, hospitals around the country, looking for ways to free up beds for COVID-19 patients and safely treat others, launched video doctors' visits and therapy sessions, and began remotely monitoring patients in group homes. This explosion in remote care was made possible in part by temporary changes to the way that most insurers reimburse for telehealth during the pandemic. If those reimbursement rules are made permanent, doctors predict a fundamental transformation in the way they treat vulnerable communities, including people with disabilities and autoimmune diseases, immigrants and those who live in rural areas.

OUTSIDE OF THE U.S., in countries like Italy, England and Australia, home hospitalization has been offered for years. Studies show that such programs often lead to better health



Doctors switched to telemedicine this spring to cut down on COVID-19 exposure

outcomes, fewer hospital readmissions and lower costs. But the finances present a major barrier in the U.S. Under its normal rules, Medicare, the country's largest health insurer, does not cover home hospitalization, and it usually requires telehealth patients to meet strict criteria.

When the COVID-19 outbreak this spring forced doctors to stop seeing patients in person, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued temporary waivers relaxing these rules. Private insurers followed suit, and telehealth usage shot up. From April 2019 to April 2020, telehealth claims increased 8,336%, according to the nonprofit FAIR Health, which analyzes private health-insurance claims. More than 9 million Medicare beneficiaries used telehealth services in the first three months of the crisis. And at the University of Virginia's network, which already had a robust telehealth program, virtual visits spiked 9,000% from February to May. "COVID-19 changed everything when it comes to



telemedicine services,” says Dr. Karen Rheuban, who directs the University of Virginia Center for Telehealth. “The genie’s not going back in the bottle.”

The Trump Administration is now pushing for more access to virtual health care, and CMS’s top administrator, Seema Verma, says she’s on board. On Aug. 3, the President signed an Executive Order calling on CMS to permanently expand the kinds of telehealth services that Medicare covers. But broader expansions would need to come from Congress. Lawmakers have introduced dozens of bills on telehealth in recent months, but so far have not seriously considered any new legislation.

Telehealth advocates say now is the time to act. A range of virtual offerings could be revolutionary for a variety of patients in different communities, including those with pre-existing conditions or who need long-term care or have significant family responsibilities. Patients who live in rural areas, where hospital closings have left millions without easy access to treatment, may

benefit the most. “The environment in a hospital, although it’s very conducive to high-intensity care, is not that conducive to being able to engage in normal activities of daily living that might be actually important for recovery,” says Dr. Michael Apkon, president and CEO of Tufts Medical Center.

In March, as Apkon watched Italian hospitals overflow with coronavirus patients, he sped up Tufts’ long-simmering telehealth plans. By April, Tufts had inked a partnership with the tech startup Medically Home and was launching a new program to provide hospital-level care in patients’ homes. Raphael Rakowski, the CEO of Medically Home, says he’s spent years telling hospitals they could reduce overhead costs and improve patients’ experiences by embracing care at home. “Sadly, it took a pandemic to amplify the patient’s role in their own care,” he says.

To qualify for a Medically Home program, patients must typically have a similar profile to Curtis Carlson: they must have relatively stable health, be suffering from common conditions such as heart failure or diabetes, and have a stable place to live. If a patient meets those criteria, Medically Home provides all the equipment, including communications devices, monitors, backup Internet, cell signals and power sources.

Nurses, paramedics and other staffers visit patients in person several times a day to administer IVs or blood tests or provide other care, and the patients check in with their doctors via video. Teams of providers also monitor patients 24 hours a day from a “command center” and can be reached immediately if complications arise.

On average, the model’s at-home hospitalizations cost 20% to 25% less than care in a traditional hospital setting, Rakowski says. In California, where Carlson was one of Adventist Health’s first patients to use the Medically Home model, Adventist Health president Bill Wing says the model may save even more money by allowing the network to avoid building more hospitals in the future.

Telehealth can also play an important role in helping patients before they reach the point of needing hospital care. When nonurgent procedures were canceled early in the pandemic, many Americans turned to virtual visits to maintain routine treatment.

While some doctors have returned to in-person visits, telehealth remains a key component of many practices, says Dr. Joseph Kvedar, a dermatologist and president of the American Telemedicine Association. This spring, UVA experimented with a number of telehealth programs, including a virtual urgent-care service, remote monitoring of patients quarantined at home with COVID-19 and a new telemedicine strategy that allowed health care providers to liaison with long-term-care facilities experiencing outbreaks.

Programs like these require large investments in technology and training, UVA’s Rheuban says, but in the long term, telemedicine “diminishes the

need for in-person visits and improves clinical outcomes.” For these innovations to continue, doctors and health systems need to convince insurers—and lawmakers—that virtual services go beyond convenience.

In the meantime, Medically Home and its hospital

partners are working to persuade more private and government insurers to cover the remote care they provide. Representatives at both Adventist Health and Tufts are tentatively optimistic. The program’s results are good, but the ability to scale remains to be seen.

Carlson, the patient in California, says his experience with remote hospital care was top-notch. His bills were covered by his Medicaid plan, and after four days of home treatment, his doctors determined he had safely recovered. But before he was formally discharged from his home hospital bed, the Adventist team helped Carlson find a primary-care physician and transition his records, and made sure he scheduled a follow-up appointment. The tech team arrived to pick up the equipment, and Carlson remained in place. “No complaints,” he says. □

20%–25%

The average cost savings for Medically Home programs compared with traditional hospital stays, according to Medically Home CEO Raphael Rakowski

Veep creator **Armando Iannucci** says these times call for Charles Dickens

By **Dan Stewart**

IN 1837, CHARLES DICKENS MOVED INTO A NARROW terraced house north of Central London. 48 Doughty Street was the novelist's home for only 2½ years, but they were productive ones—he wrote *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* there.

Today, the building is a museum dedicated to the author and his work, and it was here in February that TIME met Armando Iannucci, the screenwriter and director whose newest film is an adaptation of Dickens' *The Personal History of David Copperfield*, releasing in the U.S. on Aug. 28. The house has been restored to how it might have looked when Dickens lived; his well-worn desk takes pride of place in the study, and the dining room is laid out as if for a supper party. When we met there, the museum was still open to the public so we retreated to a meeting room decorated only with a whiteboard. "It was here that Dickens delivered his PowerPoint presentations," Iannucci deadpans.

Iannucci may be best known to U.S. audiences as the creator of HBO's *Veep*, the Emmy-winning political satire starring Julia Louis-Dreyfus as a vain and power-hungry Vice President. But in his native U.K., he has the status of a comedy icon, primarily for his role in helping to create the character Alan Partridge, the brash and clueless TV presenter played by Steve Coogan. In the 2000s, he made *The Thick of It*, a foulmouthed satire of the Tony Blair era that was a spiritual forerunner to *Veep*. His success at HBO has given him license to pursue more ambitious projects—movies like 2017's *The Death of Stalin*, a dark comedy set in Communist-era Russia, and now *Copperfield*.

It's a departure in some ways; there's very little profanity, for a start, and it's pitched at a broad audience. Far from being cynical, it is generally optimistic about humanity. But it also has the streak of absurdity that runs through all of Iannucci's work, and one eye on the inequality and social mores of the time. "I have never seen it as a departure because I grew up loving Dickens anyway, so it's like a return to the writer who most inspired me," he says. His desire to mock "social politics and social behavior" comes from Dickens. "And silliness. It's always good to have a bit of silly."

Performing comedy, Iannucci has honed a poker-faced delivery, enunciating carefully crafted sentences with a lilting rhythm in his gentle Scots accent. In conversation, he is more discursive. His

IANNUCCI QUICK FACTS

University years

He abandoned a thesis on John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

TV confessions

In 1997, he asked O.J. Simpson to autograph a piece of paper, then unfolded it on camera to reveal a hidden I DID IT printed across the top.

Family roles

His son had a cameo in *The Death of Stalin*.

answers run into each other, often whipping round a tangent before coming to his point.

Iannucci was born in Glasgow in 1963 to Italian parents, and studied English literature at Glasgow University and at Oxford before taking up comedy full-time. In his early shows on BBC Radio and TV, he gathered a team of collaborators interested in brainy, often surreal comedy fondly remembered by Britain's Generation X-ers.

Over the 15 years in which he made *The Thick of It*, its movie adaptation *In the Loop*, set in the run-up to the Iraq War, and then *Veep*, he accumulated a reputation as Britain's foremost satirical mind. His work appeared to expose the crude mechanics of politics, the obsession with surface over substance, and the bitter and cynical people attracted to it. Then, in 2015, something changed—he left *Veep* ahead of its final season, and shifted focus from the contemporary to either the past, in movies like *Stalin*, or the far future, in his HBO science-fiction comedy *Avenue 5*. In the Trump era, he says, satire struggled to keep up with reality. "The rules keep changing, if there are any rules," he says. "We'll have an [impeachment] trial, but we won't call any witnesses. Trump says he could go out and shoot a man on Fifth Avenue and still win—that suggests to me there are no rules."

IANNUCCI REREAD DAVID COPPERFIELD around 2010 and was inspired to make it as a movie, but it wasn't until he had completed work on *Stalin* that he felt equipped to tackle the book's mix of comedy, melodrama and tragedy. The novel follows the eponymous character as he passes through the social strata of Victorian England; from a loving childhood to the privations of a bottling factory and boarding school, on the path to becoming a famous writer. Much of the book was based on Dickens' own life, and he writes of struggling to belong. "This is a story that may have been written almost 200 years ago, but it still has themes that are current today," Iannucci says.

He wanted the movie to feel new—"I said to everyone [on the production team], Let's pretend there hasn't been a period drama or costume drama before," he said. "Let's not do clouds of fog and pickpockets." He tried to reimagine what a historical drama might look like, filling the movie with bright primary colors and letting his camera dance around the actors.

But first, there was the matter of casting David. Iannucci says he only ever had one actor in mind: Dev Patel, the British Indian actor who shot to fame in *Slumdog Millionaire* and who was nominated for an Oscar for his role in *Lion*. "He could be funny and gauche, but yet strong and focused and decisive," Iannucci says. "I really couldn't think of anyone else." Patel asked him how they would



explain the fact he isn't white. "He said, 'So what—it's my father? My dead father, is he Indian?' And I said, 'No, I've chosen you because you're the best person for the part.' And so I thought, Let's cast everyone else that way as well."

So around half the faces in the movie are those of Black and Asian Brits. The diversity of the cast was much scrutinized by British reviewers when the film came out in the U.K. but, says Iannucci, "It usually isn't mentioned after people have seen the film. They just say, That was a great cast; everyone was great." He believes the U.K. is somewhat behind the U.S. when it comes to diversity in casting. "Dev said, 'Normally, a thing like this, I'd be the guy standing at the door with a tray.'"

Iannucci says he was primarily motivated by a desire to "choose from 100% of the acting community available to me, rather than 85%"—but adds that, for the film he wanted to make, it made sense for the cast to reflect the people in the movie theater. "I didn't want people to feel, We're watching the past. I want them to feel, You're in this story, and therefore it's now."

'I didn't want people to feel, We're watching the past ... You're in this story, and therefore it's now.'

ARMANDO IANNUCCI, on casting his new movie

Whether there will be people in the theater to watch *Copperfield* seemed more like a certainty when we first spoke. On a phone call in late June, Iannucci says he hopes audiences will be able to find a way to see it on a big screen. "It's a film that has a sense of community, and of family, and I want people to experience that together—if they can, safely."

Like many, Iannucci experienced those early months of the pandemic with an uneasy sense of time slowing down. "I didn't think I was going to be productive," he says. Isolating with his family in his home north of London, he worked on the second season of *Avenue 5*.

What has really struck him, he says, has been the utterly transparent inability of the government to handle the pandemic—in the U.K. especially, but also in the U.S. "The fact that wearing a face mask has become a political decision ... it's bonkers." The writer believes many more people are now seeing through the carefully packaged untruths and confidence trickery of our modern leaders. "When this is all over," he predicts, "there will be a great reckoning. A great reckoning is going to come." □

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SPORTS

FOOTBALL'S LOSING PLAN

By Sean Gregory

It was never going to be easy to get to kickoff, but America's attempt to have a college football season, in the midst of a global pandemic, is looking more and more like a hopeless Hail Mary. Like so much else in America's COVID-19 moment, the effort to get players on the field is messy, is divisive and reflects poorly on leaders at the top. ▶

INSIDE

BELARUS STRONGMAN
IN TROUBLE

LEARNING FROM
GREAT-GRANDMA

CHANEL MILLER
PROCLAIMS KNOW MY NAME

TheView Opener

More than any other major team sport, college football is fueled by state identity and tribal customs: on any given fall Saturday, just visit the elaborate tailgates in places like State College, Pa.; College Station, Texas; or the Grove, some 10 acres planted in the center of the University of Mississippi, which can host more than 50,000 revelers. The sport powers local economies, and that business won't be given up easily. Even during a health crisis in which more than 170,000 people in the U.S. have died, decisionmakers are desperately trying to hold on to ingrained cultural traditions, while protecting a multi-billion-dollar athletic-industrial complex baked into higher education.

But college football lacks cohesive national leadership. Instead, each "Power 5" football conference has latitude to look after its bottom line, at the expense of unpaid players who've put their health at great risk—players have already experienced COVID-19 outbreaks at Clemson, Kansas State, Rutgers and Oklahoma. Now, left to their own devices, the Pac-12 and Big Ten conferences—with schools like Stanford, UCLA, Northwestern and Maryland in coastal and upper Midwest lean-blue states—decided to cancel their fall college football seasons. Meanwhile, schools in the Southeastern, Big 12 and Atlantic Coast conferences, which are mostly in the red states that reopened early (and saw a subsequent rise in COVID-19 cases), are saying they're still going to play football.

Not that everyone falls into neat camps. There's dissension and mixed messaging within conferences and at individual universities as well. Ohio State University quarterback Justin Fields has started a petition to reinstate the season, and it's already garnered more than 275,000 signatures. The University of Alabama, whose football team brought in \$94.6 million in revenue during the 2019 academic year, is among the schools trying to give the most unsocial-distanced of sports a go, but its fans can't seem to get out of their own way. On Aug. 16, a large group of people

in Tuscaloosa—home of the Crimson Tide—were spotted lined up, bunched together and unmasked, outside a bar. The school's athletic director took to Twitter to tsk-tsk the youthful-looking patrons. "Who wants college sports? Obviously not these people!!" wrote Alabama AD Greg Byrne. And on Aug. 17, the University of North Carolina announced that after 130 students had tested positive for COVID-19, the school was reverting to remote instruction. A few hours later, the school's athletic department released a statement, saying workouts and practices would continue. A campus was deemed unsafe for students. But the "student-athletes" would apparently be just fine.

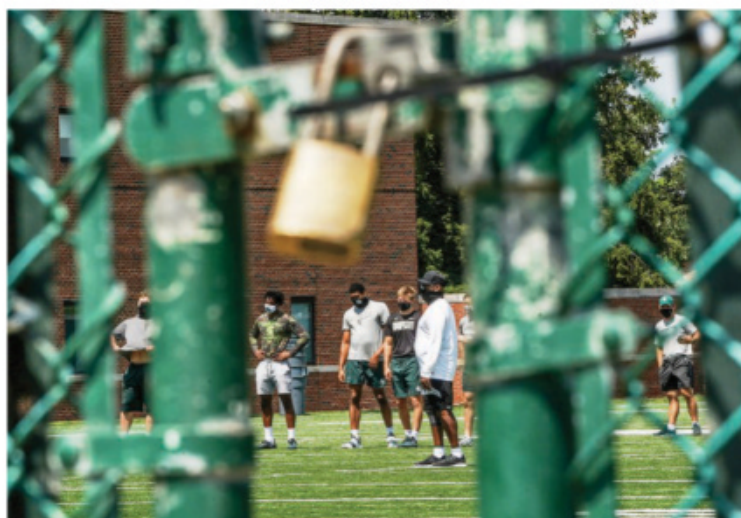
COLLEGE FOOTBALL'S LOST SEASON carries devastating consequences. The sport often funds entire athletic departments: at Alabama,

football accounts for 77% of team revenues, according to federal data. Canceling football could cause schools to cut athletic opportunities in other sports. Stanford, for example, had already dropped 11 sports, like fencing and field hockey, in early July, citing the harsh financial realities of COVID-19. Expect more

such decisions around the country.

Sadly, Americans can only blame themselves—and their leaders—for the disarray. States pushed too fast to reopen, testing is so backed up as to be virtually useless and Americans continue to die at alarming rates. While pro sports facilities sit empty, Texas A&M University still expects to fill its 100,000-plus-seat stadium to 30% capacity—despite the state's hitting 10,000 COVID-19 deaths recently—but a lot can happen between now and the season opener that will supposedly take place in a few weeks. On Aug. 16, the NCAA's top medical doctor said that without testing improvements, "there's no way we can go forward with sports."

It was an astute philosopher—Washington Nationals pitcher Sean Doolittle—who said, in July, "Sports are like the reward of a functioning society." For college football, the sins of spring and summer will deliver a quiet fall. □



Michigan State University football players at practice a day before the Big Ten canceled the fall season

SHORT READS

► Highlights
from stories on
time.com/ideas

Black teachers

Only about 7% of U.S. public-school teachers are Black, write Erica Hines of the National Center for Teacher Residencies and Michael Hines of the Stanford Graduate School of Education: **"If we take seriously the call to reimagine and restructure our schools in ways that recognize the value of Black lives, then a much larger focus on the recruitment and retention of Black teachers is nonnegotiable."**

Mandela's memory

Nelson Mandela said no one can rest as long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality exist, words that apply today. **"I imagine that he would have rallied us to fight COVID-19 everywhere, to leave no one behind,"** writes his granddaughter Ndileka Mandela.

Made in America

Bottle of Lies author Katherine Eban says Trump's Executive Order on U.S.-made drugs addresses the critical goal of rebuilding America's drug-manufacturing capacity. But, she warns, **"We shouldn't trade low-quality drugs made at a distance for low-quality drugs made at home."**

THE RISK REPORT

Putin won't ride to the rescue of Belarus' strongman

By Ian Bremmer



ANOTHER GOVERNMENT friendly to Moscow is in trouble. As Belarus continues to be gripped by protests following rigged presidential elec-

tions on Aug. 9, many expect to see Russia's Vladimir Putin intervene. Alexander Lukashenko, Belarus' President for the past 26 years, certainly hopes Putin steps in to bail him out. He would be better off spending that time packing his bags.

Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 and the enthusiasm with which it jumped into the Syrian morass have given the impression in recent years that Putin has a very low threshold when it comes to meddling in the affairs of others. But Belarus is a different story.

Instead of looking to Georgia and Ukraine, it is more instructive to look at the case of Armenia, where another Moscow-friendly government fell in 2018. Rather than marching in to ensure its preferred candidate held on to power, Moscow opted to work with Armenia's opposition to negotiate a political transition in the country; Russia got to keep its outsize influence in Armenian politics as a result, and at minimal cost.

Putin is gunning for the same outcome in Belarus. It's made possible by the fact that the protests in Belarus aren't anti-Russian or pro-Western, as the Ukraine protests were, but specifically anti-Lukashenko. According to polls out of MGIMO University, as recently as November nearly 90% of Belarusians wanted to be on some kind of friendly terms with Russia (10% preferred a more "neutral" relationship; just 0.2% wanted relations to be "hostile"). Putin wants to keep it that way. Sending in Russian troops uninvited by those currently on the streets would only serve to make enemies of the Belarusian people, and Moscow already has enough of those. Moscow has said that it would deploy troops to

Belarus in case of foreign interference, but that should be read more as a warning shot against NATO and Western interference in Russia's orbit of power than an intention to use the military.

FOR PUTIN, STEPPING IN to prop up Lukashenko would also put Russia in the crosshairs of major E.U. and U.S. sanctions, an outcome Moscow would have been desperate to avoid even before the coronavirus began squeezing the global economy. At this point, the Russian economy is in no shape to shoulder the political and economic costs of further military adventurism.

The Russian economy is in no shape to shoulder the political and economic costs of further military adventurism

If Lukashenko were a particularly loyal or competent Russian ally operating out of Minsk, Putin might have been more tempted to intervene decisively. But that ship has sailed. At this point, the smart money is on Russia's working behind the scenes on a brokered political transition to ensure it keeps its privileged position with the Belarusian government, no matter who

emerges from the political fray.

Of course, just because this is Moscow's preferred outcome doesn't mean a Russia-approved political transition will play out. It's possible that a transfer of power comes in spite of Russia's best efforts to control the outcome, in which case the eventual government in Minsk could well tilt toward Brussels rather than Moscow, a worst-case scenario for Putin. It's also possible Lukashenko manages to hold on to power so long as his security services remain loyal, leading to a Venezuela-like situation on Russia's own border, an outcome that would be as tragic as it would be ironic given Russia's past support of Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro.

But as the protests intensify, both of these outcomes are long shots. The only longer shot is that Russia's military will step in. □

HISTORY

Disaster nonresponse

At a time when one recent poll shows two-thirds of Americans believe the U.S. pandemic response is worse than that of other countries, a look back at the 1918 influenza pandemic reveals that a chaotic White House response to a public-health emergency is nothing new.

"There was no leadership or guidance of any kind directly from the White House," says John M. Barry, author of *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History*. Woodrow Wilson was focused on World War I, which was going on at the same time, and thought "anything negative was viewed as hurting morale and hurting the war effort."

In *Shall We Wake the President?: Two Centuries of Disaster Management from the Oval Office*, Tevi Troy calls Wilson the worst President in a disaster and notes that he fueled the spread of the virus by continuing troop mobilizations even near the end of the war. He never even issued a statement about the illness.

Ultimately, the 1918 flu killed about six times the number of Americans killed in World War I.

—Melissa August and Olivia B. Waxman



Red Cross volunteers in 1918



◀
*Wells in Chicago in 1909
with her children Charles,
Herman, Ida and Alfreda*

About her refusal to be silenced, sidelined or marginalized. I heard about the time she wouldn't go to the "colored car" on the Chesapeake, Ohio and Southwestern Railroad in 1884, and rather than leave the car, for which she had purchased a ticket, she was forced off. She promptly secured an attorney and sued the railroad. I heard about the time when, in 1892, three of her friends were lynched because they owned a grocery store that competed against a white-owned store, and she wrote about it so much in the Memphis *Free Speech* newspaper that her own life was threatened. She encouraged Black people to use what little power they had to protest, to boycott and ultimately to leave Memphis if they had the means to do so. She was not interested in being second in anything.

SHE LEARNED that pride and deserving attitude from her father, my great-great-grandfather James Wells, who spent most of his life enslaved in Mississippi. After the Civil War ended and Black men got the right to vote through the 15th Amendment in 1870, he and his friends met at the house to talk politics. He encouraged Ida, who was among the first generation of formerly enslaved people to legally become educated, to read the newspaper to them. She learned that people should be politically and socially engaged in shaping their own destiny. She learned that her voice was important.

When her father cast his vote for a different candidate than the man who had enslaved him suggested, he lost his carpentry tools and house. Rather than be discouraged, he rebuilt and continued to live life on his own terms. Ida learned from her father to do what was in her heart and be willing to suffer the consequences. Sometimes the price of dignity came with the loss of something else. And that was O.K.

Ida attended Shaw University (now Rust College), but still couldn't cast her vote like her father. She did not have the right to vote in 1892 when she spoke out against the murder of her friends. She did not have the right to vote in 1893 when she traveled to the U.K. to speak about the atrocities of lynching. She did not have the right to vote in 1896 when she co-founded the National Association of Colored Women. She did not have the right to vote in 1909 when she co-founded the NAACP.

In 1913, the women of Illinois gained partial suffrage, which gave them the ability to vote in presidential and municipal elections. Ida dived into taking advantage of this new right. With the

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Continuing my great-grandmother's fight

By Michelle Duster

MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER IDA B. WELLS WAS a suffragist. You probably have not heard her described this way before. She is most often honored for her journalism exposing lynchings in the South. To me, she is what great-grandmothers are to many: a teacher. From Ida, I learned that there is no end to a fight for justice. While most famous suffragists—Alice Paul, Carrie Chapman Catt—ended their fight in 1920, Ida did not. She continued to push for Black women's voting access for the rest of her life, and taught me lessons that I take into my fight for suffrage. I, too, am a suffragist, because in 2020 many Americans still do not have access to the vote.

I grew up hearing about Ida's willingness to speak up against injustice, inequality and indignity.

**Ida's refusal
to comply
fortifies
me... I must
speak up**

assistance of two white colleagues, Belle Squire and Virginia Brooks, she founded the Alpha Suffrage Club—the first all-Black suffrage club in the state—in order to exercise the power of the vote. She was also selected to represent the club at the 1913 Suffrage Parade in Washington, D.C., with the integrated Illinois delegation.

In deference to Southern white women, the organizers of the parade asked Black women to march in the back. My great-grandmother famously refused that request. After all, she was 50 years old, had been fighting for racial and gender equality for more than 30 years, and had founded a suffrage club herself. She was not about to comply with a request from white women who were half her age, or any white woman, for that matter. As the parade proceeded down Pennsylvania Avenue, my great-grandmother took advantage of the chaos, “got lost” in the crowd, then inserted

▼
Wells stands prominently,
near Booker T. Washington, at the 1902 gathering of the National Afro-American Council



herself front and center of the Illinois delegation. She deserved to have that place in history, and she knew it.

Ida’s refusal to comply fortifies me whenever I face my own dilemmas of making myself small in order to placate someone else. Do I remain silent and compliant, or do I speak up? Do I play their game in order to make them feel comfortable, or do I run the risk of being considered “difficult” and be true to myself? I must speak up. I must not accept mistreatment silently.

IN 1920, 100 years ago this month, the 19th Amendment was adopted, theoretically giving women the vote on a national basis. But the

fight for women’s suffrage did not end in 1920. Many women of color were unable to vote until the Voting Rights Act was signed in 1965 and extended in 1970 and 1975. When we honor suffragists, we should not only think of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton or even my great-grandmother; women of color in more recent history rightfully need to be considered among them. African Americans, such as Fannie Lou Hamer and Ella Baker, and Latinx women, including Dolores Huerta and Felisa Rincón de Gautier, fought for suffrage well into the 1960s and beyond. Even today we are witnessing efforts to implement barriers to voting that disproportionately affect communities of color. Even today we are fighting for suffrage.

There are increasingly strict requirements for voter IDs that are more difficult for people of color and younger voters to obtain. Laws in targeted areas that now require voters to have a street address, which discriminates against people who use P.O. boxes or do not have a permanent physical address. Fewer voting materials available in different languages. Voter-roll purges eliminating millions of eligible people of color based on small discrepancies in how their names appear or how recently they last voted. The disenfranchisement of those with felony records in most states. Lack of funding for elections in specific districts, which has contributed to malfunctioning voter machines in areas that are highly populated with people of color. Reduction of early voting days and hours—plus last-minute changes in voting locations that have disproportionately targeted communities of color—which effectively makes voting impossible for people who do shift work or lack flexible work hours. The combination of all of these barriers has reduced the number of people of color who have been able to cast their votes.

More than 100 years ago, my great-grandmother fought so that all women could win. She showed up. She wrote, organized, spoke and advocated for change while raising four children. Little did she know that women of color would need to fight for several more decades. Now, 89 years after she died, it’s time for white Americans—all Americans—to continue the fight for her.

During this centennial year of the 19th Amendment, it is important and exciting to acknowledge the determination and sacrifice of those who worked to pass it. But in the midst of the tributes and celebrations, we need to dismantle the false narrative of a whites-only suffrage movement and broaden the scope to be inclusive and reflect reality. The next generation is watching and will be inspired by the truth.

Duster is the author of the forthcoming book Ida B. the Queen: The Extraordinary Life and Legacy of Ida B. Wells

How coming forward brought me back to myself

By Chanel Miller

LAST YEAR, I PUBLISHED *KNOW MY NAME*, A MEMOIR ABOUT my experience being sexually assaulted on Stanford's campus in 2015 and the trial that followed. For three years before the book's release, I wrote while remaining anonymous, known to the public only as "Emily Doe." Every day I typed alone in the quiet, my sole job being to extricate the story. In March 2019, I finished the manuscript. It was satisfying to have tied off loose ends, but I still had one dangling string. The decision sat heavy before me: keep hiding or disclose my name.

I was warned that stepping into the public would have permanent repercussions. *You will be branded for life.* Every eruption that had occurred during the trial would happen again, amplified. More reporters at our doorstep. The onslaught of online abuse. My face would live side by side with my assailant's face, my image inseparable from his actions.

In the victim realm, we speak of anonymity like a golden shield. To have maintained it for four years was a miracle. But while everyone around me discussed the protection it afforded, no one discussed the cost. Never to speak aloud who you are, what you're thinking, what's important to you. I was lonely. I longed to know what it was like not to have to spend all my energy concealing the most heated parts of myself. I kept coming back to a line from one of Lao Tzu's poems: *He who stands on tiptoe doesn't stand firm.* I could not spend my life tiptoeing.

While I was writing, I was burrowing and absorbing—that's what healing required. Now I'd finally caught up to the present. But some of the people closest to me had not. They still thought I was an expired version of me. *She's gone*, I wanted to say. I had another motive for choosing visibility too. I had grown up without seeing people who looked like me in the public eye. I craved stories of Asian-American women who embodied power and agency. I never wanted to announce to everyone I'd ever known that I'd been raped. I simply wanted to acknowledge who I was as a result of what I'd endured. To honor that change. To say, meet me where I am.

WHENEVER I HEAR A SURVIVOR say they wish they'd had the courage to come forward, I shake my head. It was never about your courage. Most survivors don't want to live in hiding. We do because silence means safety. It's not the telling of the stories that we fear, it's what people will do when we tell our stories. Disclosing one's assault is not an admission of personal failure. Instead, the victim has done us the favor of alerting us to danger in the community. Openness should be embraced.

I just want to protect you, my mom said. But that was the answer moms are supposed to give. I knew her real answer was buried one level beneath; I just had to wait a little longer. One day the blessing finally came. She said, *If you want to break yourself, to be bigger, to help other women, do that. Pain always gives you more power to go forward. Happiness and comfort don't. It all depends on who you want to be.*

I don't know that there was ever a day I firmly decided.



^
Nearly a year after revealing her identity, Miller reflects on how her life has changed

I did know I wasn't going to let the fear of what men might do dictate what the rest of my life was going to be. The assault was never all-consuming. He could not erase everything. I was emerging as a fleshed-out author, daughter, sister, artist, too many identities to be contained. I did not know the path ahead, but I was now fully aware of the person who'd be walking it. That was enough.

I remembered a story; my mom befriended a lobster as a child. One day, her uncle boiled it. Her regret was naming it, because that's what made the loss so painful. When I revealed myself, I figured I'd promptly be boiled. But people would still have felt a moment of connection, like my mom and her lobster.

Deciding to use my name meant I'd have to learn to speak my story aloud.



But as requests for interviews poured in, I grew angry. My panic attacks returned, old unwanted feelings. I did not understand the difference between an interview and an interrogation. In court, the intention was to mock, diminish. Never to listen.

My lawyer introduced me to Lara and Hillary, who work in trauma-informed communications and offered to help me prepare. They set up a digital camera, a light, a chair. At one point, Lara said, *What do you want them to hear from you?* I'd never been asked that before. She told me I wasn't at the mercy of the reporters' questions; I was showing up to deliver a message. This reframing changed everything.

There was another question she asked that clung to me: *Who are you speaking to?* In 2001, a 16-year-old girl named Lindsay Armstrong was raped in Scotland. During trial, the defense attorney asked her to hold up the undies she'd been wearing and to read aloud what was written on them: LITTLE DEVIL. The rapist was convicted, but guilty convictions don't undo damage. A few weeks later, she killed herself. I wish I could tell her that when a question like that was posed, it was his sickness, not her weakness, that had been exposed.

For so long, I worried that to be known meant to be undone. The more they see you, the more they can use against you. Upon finishing my book, I knew this was not true. Not for me, not for Lindsay. I often question where men like the defense attorney get their confidence, while I struggle with self-loathing. How they move, unassailable, through the world, while

I remain hidden. I decided that for as long as they're out there, I will be too. I will be seen, open about everything I am and ever was, because I know that from the very beginning, the defense attorney had it wrong. To be known is to be loved.

My first interview would be with *60 Minutes*. The night before, I drew a little devil on the back of my hand. On set, I stepped aside to find a sink, slowly washing the ink off my skin, thinking, *Thank you*. My purpose will always be greater than my fear. All of these cameras and correspondents were simply the vessel I needed in order to get to her. I was going to tell her we get to wear whatever the f-ck underwear we want.

ON SEPT. 4, 2019, my name and photo were released. My friend Mel texted me *Happy birthday*, because that's what it felt like, being born into the world. I had put my voice back inside my body. I was inundated with messages of grief, shock, pride, but all I felt was peace.

Over the next few months, I would do more than 70 interviews. Christine Blasey Ford and I would sit cross-legged on my Grandma Ann's carpet, drinking tea. I realized I was never

coming into the world alone, I was joining those who had come before me. I would sit across a lunch table from Anita Hill and Gloria Steinem and other artists and activists. When I spoke, the room quieted. It was the first time I felt my own authority. They gave that to me. I emerged from that room changed.

My dad reads the book aloud to my mom, one chapter every night. They cry together, sit in silence, marinate in the sadness, go on walks to exhale. I stop by one evening and hear this ritual unfolding. There was a time I came home with the story of my assault, crumpled and terror-filled, inside me. Now my story emerges through the soft sound of my dad's voice, a balm that can be shared.

My partner Lucas and two friends plan a secret book party. I pull up to the curb; a sign outside says MARIGOLD. It is a flower shop, populated with old friends and my favorite professors, who have driven for miles to be here. There is champagne, a cake. One by one they stand up and speak, and one by one we cry. We cry for what we did not know how to do, for the toll that has been taken. We cry from the relief of being surrounded by familiar faces, the awe of all that remains. As the sun went down, my sister Tiffany, by my side through everything, held hands with me at the front of the room, everyone clapping. We had surfaced on the other side.

Almost five years after the assault, I finally meet the Swedes, the two men on bicycles who had intervened, tackled my attacker. On a warm summer evening in New York, there is Peter, there is Carl. We embrace, sit down, order calamari. The conversation could only be described as sitting by a fire. One of them voices that he'd felt regret and guilt. *For what?* I say. *For not coming five minutes sooner.* I am laughing, realizing that even the saviors feel they could have done better. I think about all the things we wish we could change, all the *if onlys*, all the different stories that could have played out. But for all the fear, the pain, all that could not be redeemed, what I'll remember for the rest of my days are the ones who never gave up on me, who led me back to my life.

***I did not
know the
path ahead,
but I was
now fully
aware of the
person who'd
be walking it***

Adapted from the paperback edition
of *Know My Name*



Harris Takes the Stage

HER TIME IN THE U.S.
SENATE REVEALS WHAT
KIND OF NATIONAL LEADER THE
DEMOCRATS' VP PICK MAY BE BY MOLLY BALL

Text UNITED to 30330
BIDEN
HARRIS



*VP candidate
Harris speaks
in Wilmington,
Del., on Aug. 13*

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THE ELECTION HADN'T GONE THE WAY SHE EXPECTED, so Kamala Harris needed a new plan. Late on the night of Nov. 8, 2016, the newly elected U.S. Senator gathered her campaign team in a drab gray room in the Los Angeles event venue where she was celebrating her victory—just as most Democrats were mourning the unexpected win of President Donald Trump. “This is some sh-t,” Harris said mournfully, describing a godson who’d come to her in tears. The staffers’ faces were grave and a siren wailed in the background as she groped for words to describe what she was feeling. “We’ve got to figure out how to go out there and give people a sense of hope,” she said.

The four years since that night have been eventful ones—for America, for the U.S. Senate and for Harris, tapped Aug. 11 as the Democratic Party’s vice-presidential nominee. The ambitious pol who won her first national office that day expected to be helping a President Hillary Clinton confirm a Cabinet and Supreme Court, craft comprehensive immigration reform and pass legislation to address climate change. Instead, she found herself in Trump’s Washington, crusading against the President’s polarizing nominees, searching mostly in vain for policy victories, and before long running to oust him.

Harris’ time in the Senate is a relatively unexplored chapter of her record. Scrutiny of her background during her presidential run focused on her time as a prosecutor and her campaign positioning, both of which drew criticism from the left. On the near geologic scale of the Senate, her time there has been but a moment, and she began running for President just two years after she arrived. Yet Harris’ Senate profile sheds light on what she brings to the Biden campaign and what sort of Vice President she could be if elected. It also raises questions about what kind of national leader she may become.

Harris became famous in the Senate for her performance on camera. Colleagues, aides and Senate watchers describe a hard-driving and determined leader who found ways to be effective, creating viral moments with her cross-examinations of witnesses.

HARRIS MADE A MARK IN HEARINGS BUT STRUGGLED TO FIND HER FOOTING ON KEY ISSUES

worked to learn policy and advance legislation, playing a major role in shaping 2018’s landmark bipartisan criminal-justice reform and shepherding it to passage. Allies say she learned quickly on the job. But she lacked a signature cause of her own, and struggled to find her footing on other issues important to Democrats, such as climate, health care and national security. She struck some observers as wanting to be all things to all people—simultaneously progressive and moderate, principled and compromising, a partisan warrior and a dealmaking pragmatist.

Her defenders say her thin record and evolving positions are the natural result of her experience: junior Senator from California was her first time as a lawmaker. Those who have worked with her say Harris thinks through problems like a lawyer, a deliberative style that can appear indecisive but actually reflects an active intellect. Her fans also see undertones of sexism and racism in critiques of her as attention-seeking or opportunistic, qualities that are practically prerequisites to a political career. The Senate’s old “workhorse or show horse” heuristic is a cliché unsuited to today’s dysfunctional Congress and polarized politics. But her tenure reflects the same difficulties that eventually doomed her presidential campaign: a privileging of personality over substance and a lack of a clearly articulated vision. Whether it stemmed from open-mindedness or political posturing, the effect was the same.



“The Senate is a place where they want you to sit and be quiet for three or four terms, and then, after 20 or 30 years, they might pay attention to you,” says Virginia Senator Tim Kaine, who was the vice-presidential nominee four years ago. “But Kamala has really made a mark.”



*Harris rose in Senate hearings,
grilling Supreme Court
nominee Brett Kavanaugh
in September 2018*

What was never in doubt, all observers say, was her instinct for the fight. That night in 2016, with her desolated campaign staff on the brink of tears, Harris outlined a path forward. “I think our campaign is actually not over,” she said. “But it’s a different kind of campaign. It’s not to win an office. But it’s going to be a campaign to fight for everything that motivated us to run for this office in the first place.”

THE QUESTIONS WERE COMING FAST, and Jeff Sessions began to stammer. It was June 2017, and Harris kept interrupting the then Attorney General to ask about his contacts with Russians during the 2016 campaign. “I’m not able to be rushed this fast,” he complained. “It makes me nervous.”

It was an attempt at levity on Sessions’ part, but the comment quickly went viral, as liberals relished the sight of a Trump apparatchik squirming under Harris’ gaze. Episodes like these became Harris’ calling card as a Senator, racking up hundreds of thousands of views online. She would go on to earn similar attention for her September 2018 questioning of then Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh and May 2019 interrogation of Sessions’ successor, William Barr. Kavanaugh appeared positively stumped when she asked, “Can you think of any laws that give the government the power to make decisions about the male body?”

Harris was already a political star when she arrived in the Senate, but the hearings helped cement her reputation. In an interview last September, Harris told TIME her interrogations reflected her frustration. “I am new to the United States Congress, and seeing this stuff up close, it’s shocking, the lack of consequence and accountability,” she said then. (The Biden-Harris campaign did not respond to a request to interview her for this article.)

Republicans sometimes accused her of being overly partisan. On two early occasions, the late Senator John McCain interrupted and upbraided her for not letting witnesses finish answering her questions. Those exchanges, in turn, further elevated her profile when fans accused McCain and other Republicans of trying to silence her. Some of her questions that seemed suggestive in the moment didn’t bear fruit, like when she asked Kavanaugh about his contacts with Trump’s personal lawyer’s law firm. Her questioning of Kavanaugh also drew the ire of Trump, who has referred to her as “nasty,” “angry” and a “mad woman” since her addition to the ticket.

But Harris’ colleagues say she didn’t just grandstand; more than many lawmakers, who chew up half their allotted time giving speeches, she actually used hearings to elicit information from often hostile witnesses. “For all of the talents of members of Congress, it still shocks me how infrequently a member can get to their question within the first two or three minutes,” says Senator Brian Schatz of Hawaii. “Kamala, without appearing rushed, without appearing hostile, can dismantle an adversary with a smile on her face.”

Harris’ hearing performances were well suited to a Senate that in recent years has done little traditional legislating. “It’s such a weird time in the Senate, because nobody really does anything,” says Adam Jentleson, a former aide to former Senate majority leader Harry Reid. “It is not a time that has tested people’s dealmaking abilities because there are no real deals to be made, and the few that do get negotiated are mostly done at the leadership level,” says Jentleson, who supported Elizabeth Warren in the presidential primary and is writing a book about Senate dysfunction. As a Democrat, “you’re mostly just voting against Trump stuff the whole time—that’s not a knock on her, it’s just the nature of the institution right now.”

The grillings were also central to why she made the Democratic ticket. They showed her mastery of the modern media environment—a key asset in a campaign against Trump. Introducing Harris as his running mate on Aug. 12, Biden praised her for “asking the tough questions that need to be asked and not stopping until she got an answer.”

With the cameras off, Harris’ prosecutorial edge vanishes, Democratic Senators say, revealing a warm, funny and accessible colleague who wears her star power lightly. In caucus meetings, they say, she provides important context for policy conversations by drawing on her experience as a person of color—one of just six elected Black Senators in U.S. history—and as the child of immigrants. Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon recalled her looking up at him when they first met—he is 6 ft. 4 in. to Harris’ 5 ft. 3 —and cracking, “With you, I’m going to need a ladder!” Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii was walking out of the chamber one day last summer when she saw Harris getting into a car and called out, “Kamala, are you going to Iowa?” Harris replied, with a laugh, “I’m f-cking moving to Iowa”—an exchange that was overheard by a reporter and subsequently put on T-shirts sold by an Iowa boutique. “Kamala made sure I got one of those T-shirts,” Hirono says.

Aides admit Harris is a tough boss, demanding hard work from those around her and rewarding them with fierce loyalty in return. Early in her

Politics

tenure, one recalls, Harris held an event at a Syrian restaurant in California addressing Trump's ban on travelers from Muslim countries. Afterward, her staff sat down to brief her, but she stopped them, insisting that everybody take a breather to eat and talk about their lives. She has worked hard to assemble a diverse staff, not an easy thing to do in an institution that has historically been overwhelmingly white and male.

Many aides recall Harris' devotion to her former press secretary Tyrone Gayle, a fellow descendant of Jamaican immigrants who died of colon cancer in October 2018. Harris' mother had died of the same disease in 2009, and she treated Gayle with maternal affection when his disease recurred. "She found a way to treat him with so much compassion and love, but she also held him to a really high standard, which Tyrone wanted and appreciated," his widow Beth Foster Gayle recently recalled on CNN. "He didn't want her to go easy on him." The day he died, Harris dropped her Senate work to join his family at the hospital in New York City, holding his hand and making him smile. To this day, her Senate office is festooned with Clemson pennants in his honor.

Harris drew praise from Republicans and Democrats alike for her work on the intelligence committee. She was "a quick study" and "very effective," the panel's former GOP chairman, Richard Burr of North Carolina, told BuzzFeed last year. The committee is known for its unusual levels of both secrecy and collegiality. Because so much of its work occurs behind closed doors, "there's no press to shine for, and it doesn't really break down along partisan lines," says the committee's top Democrat, Mark Warner of Virginia. Harris' task was made harder by the fact that she was near the bottom in seniority, he noted. "She's down there at the end of the line, a spot where most of the questions have already been asked, but she would always find something that hadn't been asked thoroughly enough or come up with a new line of questioning."

DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, Harris' record on criminal justice drew harsh criticism from civil liberties advocates and many on the left, who charged that as a prosecutor she perpetuated a punitive and unequal system rather than seeking to fix it. In the Senate, she focused much of her policy energy on criminal-justice reform. The first bill she introduced was a proposal to give people in immigration proceedings the right to a lawyer. (The bill has since passed the House but not advanced in the Senate.) She teamed up with Republican Senator Rand Paul on a bail-reform bill, which would encourage states to reduce the use of cash bail—a practice that opponents say criminalizes poverty and contributes to unequal outcomes. (That bill also has not advanced.) She worked with Democrat Cory Booker and Republican Tim Scott, the Senate's other two Black members, on antilynching legislation that is currently blocked despite near unanimous support. Along with Booker, she was a key driver of the federal prison and sentencing reform bill that Trump signed in 2018, one of the few bipartisan accomplishments of his presidency.

Even as many of her proposals have stalled, Booker argues, she has



Harris, with the intelligence committee in 2018, won GOP praise for her hard work offstage

brought fresh thinking to the tradition-bound halls of Congress. "A lot of times, when you bring out a new idea, you've got to get people familiar with it," he says, noting that such efforts may take years to bear fruit. "Kamala came into the Senate and made an impact."

Harris and Booker also collaborated on the Democrats' police-reform bill that followed this summer's racial-justice protests. It passed the House, and the Senators believed it was a good-faith effort at a compromise Republicans might be able to support. But Senate Republicans offered their own bill instead, putting it on the floor instead without the opportunity for committee deliberation, and Democrats blocked it from advancing. "It's unfortunate that majority leader [Mitch] McConnell was not willing to give that legislation adequate hearing, because I think she was very effective in making the case," says Democratic Senator Jeanne Shaheen. But Scott, the Republican bill's author, accused the Democrats of playing politics. In a July interview with *TIME*, he alluded to Harris' position in the Veepstakes, saying, "I'm hoping that the presidential politics of choosing a running mate does not stand in the way of Senate Democrats coming to the table."

Harris' defenders say her shift to the left on criminal justice reflects not the political expediency of a primary candidate seeking to please the base, but the evolving national dialogue on a fraught



issue. Advocates who worked with her on the topic say she was engaged, substantive—and realistic. “I’m a little frustrated by a lot of the criticism of her evolution on criminal-justice issues,” says Holly Harris, a Republican lawyer who serves as executive director of the Justice Action Network. “We don’t ask a lot of male bill sponsors to explain their evolution. We’re just grateful to have their support.”

Harris had a harder time finding her footing on issues further afield from her own experience. Her presidential campaign notably struggled with the central issue of health care: as a Senator, she co-sponsored Bernie Sanders’ single-payer legislation, but after months of conflicting statements, she issued a plan that would preserve the private insurance system. “Legislating is totally different than being an attorney general,” says an aide to another Democratic Senator. “Not being a veteran of these issue debates, she didn’t necessarily know the fine points of something like Medicare for All.”

Climate change was another issue on which Harris got more assertive over time. She was an original co-sponsor of the left-wing Green New Deal and signed a pledge not to take campaign money from the fossil-fuel industry. But climate activists were skeptical of her as a presidential candidate, partic-

ularly when she was the only major candidate not to immediately commit to a September CNN town hall devoted to the issue. After criticism, she changed her mind, and in her 33-minute segment she vowed to back ending the filibuster if Republicans held up climate legislation, endorsed a fracking ban and called for the prosecution of fossil-fuel companies. “Everybody was pretty much leading in a progressive direction,” says Julian Brave NoiseCat, a climate activist who is vice president of policy and strategy at the progressive group Data for Progress. “And the question was, How far were you willing to go?”

The initial trepidation followed by outspoken position taking was typical of Harris’ approach to the high-profile issue. Harris subsequently found a niche that suited her comfort zone: environmental justice and environmental litigation. In July, she partnered with Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to introduce a Climate Equity Act that would require environmental legislation to receive an “equity score” that judged how it would affect at-risk communities and create new burdens for administrative action. Her office released a new version of the proposal just days before she was announced as Biden’s VP pick. “She’s not driven by a desire to protect the polar bears,” says RL Miller, a California Democratic activist and political director of Climate Hawks Vote, a group that advocates for aggressive climate-change policies. “She is driven by the desire to protect low-income African-American people living next to the Los Angeles urban oil field.”

HARRIS’ LACK OF FIRM STANCES on many issues contributed to her campaign’s demise. But as a vice-presidential candidate, that flexibility could be an asset. Colleagues and aides say she is passionate but not doctrinaire, a team player open to others’ good ideas. Even some of the progressives who regard Harris with suspicion express hope that her malleability means she can be nudged leftward. The challenge for Harris will be establishing herself as a national figure in that role—showing that her flexibility comes from pragmatism, not opportunism.

When Biden was Vice President, he brought the perspective of an old foreign policy hand to the White House and served as a sort of Senate whisperer for President Barack Obama, who had, like Harris, spent just four years in the chamber. Biden, who fetishizes the Senate as an institution, is unlikely to cede that duty to his own second-in-command. But some on the left hope recent experience will make Harris more inclined than Biden to play hardball with McConnell, who they believe has abused procedural norms to destroy the traditional policymaking process. “I don’t

see anything in her record in the Senate that suggests she’s not a strong progressive,” says Jentleson, the former Reid aide. “But the rubber will hit the road on issues like the filibuster. When you want to advance a very progressive policy and get stopped, do you reform the Senate to get things done?”

SOME PROGRESSIVES HOPE THAT HARRIS’ MALLEABILITY MEANS SHE CAN BE NUDGED LEFTWARD

Aside from Harris’ campaign promise to end the filibuster to pass climate legislation, neither she nor Biden has committed to major changes to Senate rules—a proposition that’s highly contentious within the chamber on both sides of the aisle. Without such changes, it will be an uphill battle to enact the sweeping policy agenda articulated at this summer’s Democratic convention, even if the party wins the Senate majority in November. Would Harris’ time in the gridlocked body lead her to argue for drastic measures? If Biden and Harris are inaugurated next January, how Kamala Harris regards the U.S. Senate could be the question on which a Biden presidency’s legacy depends. —*With reporting by ANNA PURNA KAMBHAMPATY, JUSTIN WORLAND and JULIA ZORTHIAN* □



UND

AT HOME IN KENTUCKY IN mid-August, Mitch McConnell didn't sound the slightest bit concerned. "The Postal Service is going to be just fine," the Senate majority leader drawled, echoing the soothing talking points of other Republicans: the Trump Administration was just reforming a 228-year-old institution, and President Donald Trump's new Postmaster General, Louis DeJoy, was making it more efficient. The same day, Trump described the situation in his own, half-joking way: "I want to make the post office great again, O.K.?"

But the lighthearted talk just highlighted the spreading national panic that had triggered it: less than 80 days before a presidential election that will rely more heavily on voting by mail than any previous race in U.S. history, the great machinery of the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) seemed to be sputtering to a halt. The "operational pivot" DeJoy announced in July, which included restrictions on staff overtime and transportation costs, produced a backlog of undelivered mail, according to postal union representatives. The Department of Veterans Affairs acknowledged that prescription drugs mailed to veterans via USPS had been delayed by an average of almost 25% over the past year. Small businesses, which

rely on the affordability of USPS rates, began facing angry customers whose packages were lost in distribution centers for weeks.

At the end of July, the Postal Service itself sounded the alarm, sending warning letters to 46 states, including the electoral battlegrounds of Michigan, Pennsylvania and Florida, alerting them that the USPS might not be able to meet their election deadlines. In all, more than 159 million registered voters live in the 40 states that received the most urgent warnings, according to the *Washington Post*.

Panicked constituents papered the door of DeJoy's D.C. apartment building with fake ballots reading, SAVE THE POST OFFICE, SAVE OUR DEMOCRACY; House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called lawmakers back for an emergency session to vote on a bill to protect the USPS; and Democratic Senator Gary Peters launched an investigation into DeJoy's operational changes. "It's a level of concern I haven't seen in the past," says Melissa Rakestraw, a mail carrier in Illinois.

DeJoy, who spent more than three decades running New Breed Logistics, a national supply-chain services provider with 7,000 employees, seemed blindsided by the fallout. The Postal Service has lost money for years, thanks to the rise

DELIVERABLE

By embroiling the Postal Service in controversy and shaking Americans' confidence in mail voting, the President wins

By Haley Sweetland Edwards and Abby Vesoulis

Illustration by Ben Wiseman for TIME

Nation

of the Internet, perennial mismanagement and heavy-handed but ineffective government interventions. The point of his reform agenda, which included reassigning or displacing 23 veteran postal executives, was to cut costs and increase “performance for the election and upcoming peak season,” he wrote in an internal memo obtained by CNN. The slowdowns and backlogs, he said, were “unintended consequences.”

But outsiders spotted a pattern. Behind the daily chaos, Trump’s presidency has one abiding characteristic: using the vast power and reach of the U.S. government to serve Trump’s own political ends. He has repeatedly explained executive actions by pointing to the political benefit they bring him, and a steady parade of his top advisers have offered detailed examples after leaving the Administration in exasperation. Trump tried to turn the Department of Homeland Security “into a tool used for his political benefit,” said the agency’s former chief of staff, by, for example, ordering officials to close stretches of the border in Democratic-led California rather than GOP-led Arizona and Texas. The President pleaded with the leader of China to make trade decisions that would bolster Trump’s relationship with crucial farm-state voters ahead of the 2020 election, according to former National Security Adviser John Bolton. And of course, Trump was impeached eight months ago in part for allegedly withholding military aid from Ukraine until the country investigated Trump’s political rivals. The list goes on.

If there were any doubts about the Administration’s motives for the so-called reform of the Postal Service, the President himself seemed to put them to rest. In an Aug. 13 interview with Fox Business, the President said he was blocking Democrats’ proposed \$25 billion for the USPS and \$3.5 billion for additional election resources because that outlay would help the Postal Service handle a surge in mail voting this year. “They need that money in order to make the post office work, so it can take all of these millions and millions of ballots,” Trump said. “Now, if we don’t make a deal, that means they don’t get the money. That means they can’t have universal mail-in voting, they just can’t have it.”

Less than a week later, DeJoy an-

nounced the suspension of much of his reform agenda until after the election to “avoid even the appearance of any impact on election mail.” But the damage may already have been done.

Whatever happens to the USPS in coming months, Trump benefits from having cast doubt on the USPS and mail voting and from having unleashed a specter of impropriety over the core exercise of democracy. When Americans lose faith in the electoral process, voter turnout slumps, and if Trump supporters don’t believe their votes were fairly counted, they’re less likely to accept an outcome in which he does not win.

MOST AMERICANS LOVE the Postal Service, and rely on it, regardless of their politics. More than 90% view the agency favorably, according to a 2020 Pew Research Center poll. George Washington himself saw a national postal network as an amplifier of democratic ideals and that egalitarianism continues today: FedEx and UPS pin a premium on letters destined thousands of miles away, while a letter mailed by USPS anywhere within the country costs just 55¢.

But as the Post Office has faced new challenges over the years, lawmakers of both parties have advocated for reform. In 1970, after more than 150,000 postal workers went on strike, halting the delivery of vital mail, the Democratic-led Congress oversaw a reorganization of the

USPS, demoting the Postmaster General from the Cabinet and, crucially, cutting off taxpayer support: the Postal Service as we know it today funds itself from its own sales.

With the rise of the Internet, those sales have plummeted. In 2001, the USPS moved more than 103.7 billion pieces of first-class mail; in 2019, the number was almost half that, at 55 billion. Rising fuel prices and trucking costs and an uptick in the number of packages have exacerbated the problem.

In 2006, Congress again went after the Postal Service, this time passing a bipartisan bill—it was approved by unanimous consent in the Senate—mandating that the USPS pre-fund health benefits for its retirees and invest those funds in government bonds, which offer dismal returns. It is a requirement that no other entity, public or private, must meet, and it costs the USPS more than \$5 billion per year—roughly 7% of its total operating costs. The requirement is responsible for a large portion of the agency’s annual shortfall, according to its financial reports. Last year, USPS tallied \$79.9 billion in expenditures and finished the year with \$11 billion in outstanding debt.

The parties have long been divided over how to fix these deficits. For decades, Democrats accused Republicans of sabotaging the Postal Service in an effort to privatize it. Republicans denied the charge and defended their reform



DEJOY SAYS DELAYS WERE ‘UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES’



Postmaster General DeJoy, left, visits Capitol Hill in August. Americans worried that delivery delays might impact mail voting protested outside his D.C. apartment this month

efforts by pointing, not incorrectly, at the USPS's hemorrhaging balance sheets. But then came the Trump Administration, with its tendency to say the quiet part out loud. In 2018, the White House suggested for the USPS a "future conversion from a government agency into a privately held corporation."

Over the past five months, this relatively obscure policy fight was transformed into a democracy-defining battle. In April, the USPS asked Congress for \$75 billion to help it weather the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. When stores shuttered, the Postal Service saw first-class mail, its most profitable product, decline, while the volume of packages—the most labor-intensive to deliver—surged, as Americans increasingly shopped online. Democrats are pushing for more USPS funding in their latest relief bill, but the White House has so far resisted. (In late July, the Treasury Department authorized the agency to borrow up to \$10 billion under strict conditions.)

In May, DeJoy's appointment to the top Postal job seemed to confirm Democrats' worst fears—that what had been an ideological push to privatize the Postal Service had morphed into an effort to swing the election for Trump. DeJoy "has deliberately enacted policies to sabotage the Postal Service to serve only one person, President Trump," said Representative Gerald Connolly of Virginia, whose House subcommittee oversees the USPS.

Democratic lawmakers had no say in the appointment of DeJoy, who donated

more than \$1.1 million to the Trump Victory campaign fund from August 2016 to February 2020. Under normal circumstances, the USPS's Board of Governors, which appoints the Postmaster General, is bipartisan: Presidents name each of the nine Senate-confirmed members to seven-year terms. But Senate Republicans blocked Obama's nominees, allowing Trump to inherit an empty board, which he happily filled with like minds.

Unable to prevent DeJoy's rise, congressional Democrats helplessly pointed at his apparent conflicts of interest. At the time he was appointed Postmaster General, the GOP megadonor held at least \$30 million worth of stock in a supply chain company that contracts with the USPS, raising questions of whether he is violating ethics rules that prevent officials from participating in government matters affecting their personal finances. DeJoy also holds stock options that allow him to purchase Amazon shares at a below-market rate. As Amazon increases the proportion of packages it delivers itself—and toys with the idea of delivering non-Amazon parcels, too—the retail giant is quickly becoming a direct USPS competitor.

DEJOY'S ANNOUNCEMENT on Aug. 18 that he would suspend much of his reform agenda until after the election may seem like a win for Democrats. In the coming weeks, DeJoy will be hauled in front of both the House and Senate for hearings, and a congressional investigation into this summer's events is

ongoing. But the politics aren't so simple.

DeJoy's reversal left a host of unanswered questions. What would happen to the dozens of mail-sorting machines and drop boxes that have already been hauled off? When will workers' overtime be approved? Will postal workers be able to take more than one trip per day? Will states have to buy more expensive postage to circumvent delays? Without proactive moves to safeguard mail delivery, hundreds of thousands of ballots may still end up in the trash. In 32 states, ballots must arrive by Election Day, according to an analysis by the National Conference of State Legislatures. During this year's primaries, at least 65,000 mailed ballots were discarded for various reasons, according to NPR. While that represents only about 1% of the ballots in most states, according to the NPR analysis, tiny margins matter: in 2016, Trump won Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, each by margins of less than 1%, but that was enough to claim 46 electoral votes—and the presidency.

The best-case scenario for the agency is that Congress gives it emergency funding, public scrutiny persists and DeJoy makes good on his promise to "deliver the nation's election mail on time." But that can't undo what's been done.

By discrediting the Postal Service and mail voting, Trump has already tainted the election results, whatever they may be. According to an Axios-Ipsos poll in August, 47% of voters supporting Vice President Joe Biden said they planned to vote by mail, compared with just 11% of Trump supporters. If that disparity holds true in November, the fallout could be bad for both parties. Older and rural voters, who have in the past relied on mail ballots and tend to support Republicans, may be discouraged from voting at all. Trump could also appear to be ahead on election night among in-person voters, only to be overtaken as disproportionately Democratic mailed ballots are slowly counted—days and weeks later.

It's not hard to imagine the damage that a hung election, like the 2000 Bush-Gore debacle, could exact in the era of Trump-fueled disinformation. Democracy, after all, is not unlike flying in Peter Pan's world; if you stop believing in it, it ceases to work. —*With reporting by ALANA ABRAMSON* □

Nation

BATTLEFIELD

*An unrelenting wave of
deadly shootings has hit
Chicago this summer
amid the pandemic*

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN J. KIM

D CHICAGO

In a city's fight against gun violence,
do federal agents help or hurt?

BY W.J. HENNIGAN/CHICAGO





THE TROUBLE BEGAN, AS TOO OFTEN IT DOES IN Chicago, with a gun.

On a humid afternoon, on Aug. 9, a woman called 911 to report that a man in a red hat and shirt was starting a fight at Moran Park in Englewood, a predominantly Black neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. There were children playing nearby, she warned, and he had a gun. At 2:38 p.m., four Chicago police officers in an unmarked Ford SUV rolled past the park, where they spotted a man matching the caller's description. When they flipped on their lights, he ran. The chase led down an alley, where the suspect fired at least eight shots at two officers sprinting after him, according to prosecutors. The cops returned fire. The suspect fell to the ground, then stood back up and disappeared into an abandoned lot.

As the officers hunted for him, the radios clipped to their bulletproof vests crackled to life: a gunshot victim needed help at a house nearby. The police headed to a powder blue bungalow, where they saw a trail of blood leading from the foot of the front door, through the house and down to the basement. There, police say, they found the suspect, blood seeping from wounds in his cheek and abdomen. The man, later identified as 20-year-old Latrell Allen, was taken into custody and sent to a hospital for treatment.

It didn't take long for news of the shooting to circulate as yet another example of racial injustice at the hands of police. Tempers flared, particularly in the South Side and West Side communities, where a legacy of segregation, police discrimination, failed schools and misguided public-housing policy have thwarted advancement of Black families for generations. That night, for more than three hours, hundreds of looters smashed windows and carried away armfuls of jewelry, clothes and electronics from retail stores, first on the South Side, then farther north, into downtown shopping districts, including the city's Magnificent Mile.

When the sun rose on Monday, Aug. 10, shattered glass carpeted sidewalks, trash billowed down major streets, and police stood guard in riot gear on corners. In an interview the next day with TIME, Mayor Lori Lightfoot laid the blame for the chaos not on protesters but on organized criminal operatives taking advantage of an emotional moment to strike. "It was a planned attack," the mayor declared.

The cryptic allegation was lent credence by the person making it. Elected in 2019 as the first Black woman and openly gay person to serve as Chicago's mayor, Lightfoot has a history of independence and a balanced background in criminal justice, having served as a federal prosecutor and led two bodies that police the city's law enforcement. Where some saw mindless violence, she



▲
Less than two years in office, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot faces a surge of gun violence

observed elements of preparation "with U-Haul trucks and cargo vans and sophisticated equipment used to cut metal."

Riots may look alike, especially from a distance. But locals close to the ground, including mayors, are in position to tell the difference between damage done by a protest that's spun out of control—and by those simply using social unrest as cover for personal gain.

As he seeks re-election as a law-and-order candidate, Trump has seized upon violent crime in Democrat-led cities as a problem only he and the federal government can fix. On July 22, he expanded Operation Legend, the plan to "surge" hundreds of federal agents into U.S. cities experiencing what he called "a shocking explosion of shootings, killings, murders and heinous crimes of violence."

After decades of declining crime, cities across the U.S. are experiencing a spike in shootings and homicides this summer. No city has been hit worse than Chicago. In July alone, 565 people were shot—at least 63 of them juveniles.

But while Operation Legend, which has deployed agents from the FBI, DEA and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) in nine cities, offers critical expertise to solve crimes, it is irrelevant to the deeper systemic issues that contribute to the violence, such as poverty, underfunded public schools and structural racism. These matters may be of secondary importance to a President running for re-election who is brazenly attempting to stoke fears of suburban voters by associating race with violence.

“If tamping down violence were a policing problem, it would’ve been solved decades ago in Chicago,” says Elce Redmond, 56, a community organizer from the South Side’s Bronzeville neighborhood. “We don’t need more cops; we need better cops.”

That leaves officials like Lightfoot where they were before Trump waded in: looking for real solutions. She recognizes the city is at an inflection point brought on by the pandemic, the ensuing economic paralysis, and the widening gulf of suspicion between the Black community and her police force. “The question is, How do we find opportunity out of even these very dark days?” Lightfoot asks. “And what do we do to band together? Because—it sounds clichéd, but it is so true—we won’t survive this moment. We will not thrive. We will not move beyond, get stronger and better, if we don’t unite.”

EVERY TIME somebody is murdered in Chicago, Oji Eggleston’s Android phone vibrates with a text. As executive director with Chicago Survivors, a nonprofit that provides services to the families of homicide victims in the city, he gets a message generated by a Chicago police reporting system that alerts him to another grieving family. “I receive the name, gender, age and location of every single homicide victim,” he says. “They come at all hours of the day, nearly every day.”

Eggleston’s organization guides each family through the complicated processes that go with caring for a dead loved one: what to do at the medical examiner’s

office, what to ask at the funeral parlor and how to pay for it all. But it’s the city’s cycle of violence that drives the need for Chicago Survivors. “When families are grieving and they don’t receive the necessary resources in a timely manner, that grief can turn to anger and that anger can turn to retaliation,” Eggleston says. “So that’s where we look to provide the violence interruption.”

No challenge has proved more vexing to Lightfoot during her first full year in office than stopping this grim tide. The 443 homicides recorded in Chicago through July were a 53% increase over a year earlier. (New York City, with three times the population, had just 244 murders.) It’s difficult to find a corner in Chicago’s South and West sides not in some way affected by gang violence. Police say there are 117,000 gang members across the city, which counts 55 known gangs. Officers in Chicago routinely confiscate more illegal guns than those in New York City and Los Angeles combined. Now, during the pandemic, gun sales are hitting record highs across the country. FBI background checks, a proxy to track sales, have surged.

Chicago has no gun shops in the city and no background-check loopholes for private sales. And yet so far this year, Chicago police have seized more than 6,400 guns, a pace set to match the 10,000 confiscated last year. A 2017 study found that some 60% of guns used in crimes come from states like Wisconsin, Mississippi and Indiana. “They have very different sensibilities about guns than we do here in Chicago,” Lightfoot says. “You can literally drive over the border into Indiana and get military-grade weapons in any quantity that your money will buy. And they bring them back to Chicago.”

THE FOURTH OF JULY WEEKEND in Chicago was particularly gruesome. There were 87 people shot across the city. Among the 17 people killed was Tyrone Long, 33. He was outside with friends when a man riding in a blue SUV opened fire. Shot several times in the chest, he died at a nearby hospital. “It wasn’t like he just died or got

hit by a bus,” says Linda Long, his mother. “Someone took his life. And it really hurts my soul that my son is not here.”

Tyrone, nicknamed Boomer by his father, was the second oldest of Linda’s four boys. He was a cook, just like her, and the father of an 8-year-old daughter, Zhuri. He volunteered time at his aunt’s antiviolence organization, Sacred Ground Ministries, where he counseled young people about the risks of getting involved in gangs and drugs. His cousin Eric Williams, 25, was killed by gun violence in 2012. Detectives haven’t called for weeks about Tyrone’s murder. “No one has ever got caught for my nephew’s death, and it ain’t looking good on finding Tyrone’s killer,” Linda says. “Nobody is listening. When are they going to listen? When are they going to

hear us crying out for help? When?”

To say the Chicago Police Department (CPD) has a trust problem in Black neighborhoods is a gross understatement. The

department’s long, troubled history with communities of color spans generations. For decades, long before George Floyd’s death, waves of demonstrations routinely choked city streets to denounce an institution seen as more akin to an occupying force than committed public servants.

A 2017 Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation found officers in the city had acted with a “pattern and practice of excessive force,” disproportionately targeting people of color in stops, searches, arrests and shootings, including the notorious 2014 killing of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald. In 2019, the DOJ and the city agreed to police-reform agreements enforced by a judge, known as a consent decree, that would address civil rights abuses the probe brought to light.

One year after being elected, Lightfoot hired as superintendent the former Dallas police chief David Brown, renowned for his earnest efforts to bridge the gap between cops and communities of color. “I’m going to go back to what I believe has been the most promising aspect of policing in the last 20 years—community-oriented policing,” Brown

**THE 443 HOMICIDES
RECORDED IN CHICAGO
THROUGH JULY WERE A
53% INCREASE OVER A
YEAR EARLIER**

says. “We are all safer when we work together, when we trust each other, when the relationship is strong. Even when we have mistakes made by police, we shouldn’t let our missteps or past indiscretions prevent us from moving forward together.”

That takes an investment of his officers’ time inside neighborhoods, going block by block, meeting people and building trust, Brown says. The city increased the number of cops on the streets, spent more than \$7 million to expand local organizations’ antiviolence outreach and launched a new 300-officer unit to participate with community-relations programs, including food drives and church gatherings.

The head of Chicago’s police union initially celebrated Trump’s approach of sending additional federal officers. But community activists ask how a couple hundred agents from out of town can meaningfully augment a police force of 13,000, the nation’s second largest.

“The false pretense here is that we can inject a number of people from three-letter agencies and that’s going to fix all the problems,” says Ed Yohnka, spokesman for the ACLU of Illinois. “That kind of thinking has never really gotten anywhere and, in fact, has driven further wedges between the police and communities.”

Lightfoot agrees, recalling the chaos federal agents provoked in Portland, Ore. As additional agents from the FBI, DEA and ATF began arriving in Chicago, Lightfoot detected more national politics than local impact. “A lot of rhetoric and hype,” she said, adding: “The jury’s out as to whether or not they’re actually going to be helpful.”

ON JULY 27, ATF agents in Chicago popped the trunk of a midnight blue 2015 Dodge Charger and found seven handguns lying inside. According to court documents, the guns belonged to

Benjamin Cortez-Gomez, 27, a convicted felon nicknamed Bennie Blanco. Agents had tracked Cortez-Gomez after he allegedly purchased the weapons in the Indianapolis area and brought them into Chicago for resale.

Now he had been arrested, and his guns sat on a gray countertop inside a modified tractor-trailer parked outside a police facility on Chicago’s West Side. The \$1.3 million mobile crime lab and the personnel who came with it are part of Trump’s Operation Legend. ATF technician Jill Jacobson selects a black Glock pistol, carefully loads it with 9-mm ammunition and inserts the gun’s muzzle into a red metal tank called a

takes as good news. “They were taken off the street before a crime took place,” she says. “That’s our goal.”

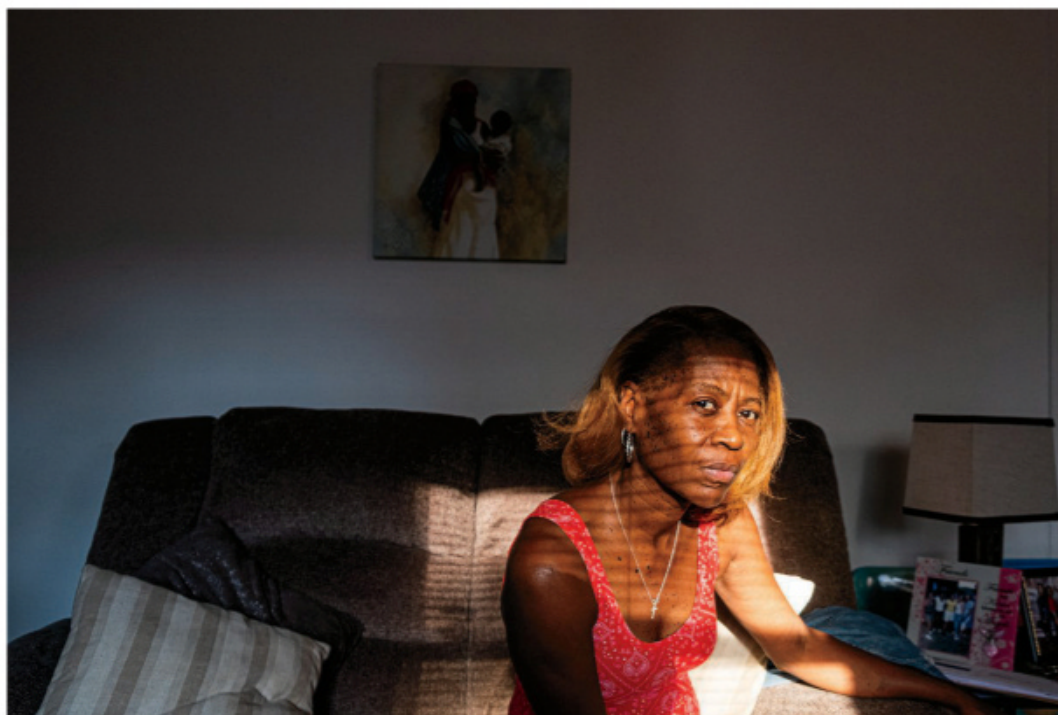
It’s not unusual for federal agents to be working alongside local police in U.S. cities. DEA agents routinely play a role on drug-trafficking cases, and ATF agents in gun cases. What’s unusual is the politics: Trump and his Administration talk about Operation Legend as a way to repair Democrat-led cities. That leads mayors like Lightfoot to question whether the goal is to help local law enforcement or help Trump get re-elected.

Operation Legend takes its name from LeGenD Taliferro, a 4-year-old boy shot and killed as he slept at his home in Kansas City, Mo., at the end of June. It has thus far expanded to Chicago; Albuquerque, N.M.; Cleveland; Detroit; Indianapolis; Milwaukee; Memphis; and St. Louis. The decision to add a city to the list is ultimately signed off on by Attorney General William Barr.

U.S. Attorney John Lausch of the Northern District of Illinois says bringing in agents to work closely with local police “provides critical help” on stopping and deterring crime from taking place. Prosecutors at the federal level

are capable of pursuing charges that carry stiffer penalties than at the county level. For instance, unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon, one of the charges Cortez-Gomez faces for allegedly having seven guns in his trunk, is punishable by up to 10 years in federal prison. Additionally, convicts must serve at least 85% of their sentence, which can be in a prison located in a state on the other side of the country. “In the federal system, we have very strong sentences for violent crimes, and that helps us get further information from these offenders. Criminals know that,” Barr said at an Aug. 19 press conference, adding that Operation Legend had netted 1,485 arrests thus far. “Our work is just getting started.”

And yet even though Lausch’s office



▲
Linda Long’s 33-year-old son Tyrone was killed on July 4 in a drive-by shooting. “It really hurts my soul,” she says

“snail trap.” She squeezes the trigger. A muffled pop. Then another.

Jacobson collects the two spent cartridges and walks them to a workstation on the other end of the air-conditioned trailer. A colleague briefly studies the cartridges under a microscope, then uploads their images into a national database. The firing pin and explosion inside each gun leave behind tiny markings, like fingerprints, which can be matched to previous crimes. There are no hits on these guns, which Kristen deTineo, ATF’s special agent in charge in Chicago,

has prosecuted more gun crimes each year for the past three years, gun violence continues to rise. Community activists, organizers and civil rights groups worry that the arrival of feds is not making things better. The agents are not subject to the same level of oversight as local police on matters like use of force and body cameras. Not long after the Operation Legend announcement, hundreds of protesters gathered for a rally near where ATF agents set up their trailer. For several days, protesters assembled outside, calling for a decrease in the \$1.6 billion CPD budget and for the money to be invested instead in long-neglected communities.

Operation Legend sparked protests in Albuquerque. Mayors in several cities say they have serious reservations about its impact and intent. Quinton Lucas, mayor of Kansas City, where the program first rolled out, thought Trump purposefully muddled the use of federal forces in Portland and the deployment of agents under Operation Legend to project authority during instability. “It’s a culture war,” Lucas says. “It’s about cities, and cities being out of control and Trump’s going to have something that helps, whether it helps or not. And we’re pawns in this game.”

CHICAGO’S PROBLEMS are stubborn, and speak to the tension at the heart of public safety, as officials across the country address questions of race and policing. Lightfoot came into office intent on providing more opportunities to neighborhoods of color, which activists say know best how to prevent violence. But the mayor has been frustrated by the criminal activity already taking place.

“To see young people who are Black act in the way that they acted, like they had every right to take somebody else’s property—and not just the big guys who have lots of insurance but the little shop

owners in neighborhoods all across the city—they have so little respect for all the sacrifice that people who look like them put into forming a business, all their hurdles, all their challenges that small businesses have,” Lightfoot says. “Particularly small businesses of color, without any regard for not only hurting those business owners but hurting also employees, who also are generally employees of color. That offends me to the core.”

And by its nature, the drama of crime overwhelms all else, including the straits that confine many of the city’s poor. In June, the city’s unemployment rate was 15.6%, significantly higher than the national rate but higher still outside wealthy

haven’t financially recovered since the 2008 recession,” says Liz Dozier, a former high school principal who runs Chicago Beyond, a nonprofit that seeks to alleviate economic pressures within low-income communities. “The pandemic has just devastated communities even more.” Chicago Beyond has invested more than \$30 million in organizations that target at-risk youth and young adults. Since the onset of the pandemic, Chicago Beyond has been running weekly food drives across the city. But quarantines and lockdowns have restricted access to churches, schools and community centers.

Dozier argues that with its hardworking ethos and multiculturalism, Chicago still qualifies as a microcosm of America. Its problems may be deep-seated, she says, but they are the problems the country must confront if we are to move forward. And the starting point in any discussion is the question of security—for everyone.

Despite economic and racial disparities, the city is interconnected in ways that are not always apparent. On Jewelers Row along Wabash Avenue in Chicago’s central business district, some small-business owners saw their entire livelihood

wiped away in this month’s mass looting. Mohammad Ashiq, the 60-year-old owner of Watch Clinic, entered his watch-repair shop to discover that all his inventory, some \$900,000 worth, had been stolen from his glass showcases. Hundreds of watches for sale and those he was fixing for customers were missing. None of it was insured. “It is my entire life,” he says as a nearby L train rumbles above his store. “Forty-two years in this business. I am left with nothing but my health.”

His fate had been decided less than 24 hours earlier, less than 10 miles away, when a Chicagoan spotted a man with a gun. —With reporting by TESSA BERENSON, LESLIE DICKSTEIN and MARIAH ESPADA



ATF technician Jill Jacobson is a member of a team of specialists sent to Chicago as part of the Operation Legend task force

North Side neighborhoods, where single-digit jobless rates skew the city-wide figure, analysts say. Severe poverty, insecurity and childhood hunger are geographically concentrated in the West and South sides.

Many Black families, who have given up hope or managed to pull themselves out of poverty, have moved away. In 2019, for the fourth year in a row, Chicago saw its population decline. Nearly 50,000 Black residents have left over the past five years.

“There are parts of our city that



*A nurse cares for a
COVID-19 patient
in the ICU at the
Aundh District
Hospital in Pune
on Aug. 11*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
ATUL LOKE FOR TIME



World

Losing Hope in India

Faced with a recession, a surging virus and majoritarian rule, many people in the world's largest democracy are wondering how they'll survive

By Billy Perrigo/
London and
Neha Thirani
Bagri/Pune,
India

With a white handkerchief covering his mouth and nose, only Rajkumar Prajapati's tired eyes were visible as he stood in line.

It was before sunrise on Aug. 5, but there were already hundreds of others waiting with him under fluorescent lights at the main railway station in Pune, an industrial city not far from Mumbai, where they had just disembarked from a train. Each person carried something: a cloth bundle, a backpack, a sack of grain. Every face was obscured by a mask, a towel or the edge of a sari. Like Prajapati, most in the line were workers returning to Pune from their families' villages, where they had fled during the lockdown. Now, with mounting debts, they were back to look for work. When Prajapati got to the front of the line, officials took his details and stamped his hand with ink, signaling the need to self-isolate for seven days.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi appeared on national television on March 24 to announce that India would go under lockdown to fight the coronavirus, Prajapati's work as a plasterer for hire at construction sites around Pune quickly dried up. By June, his savings had run out and he, his wife and his brother left Pune for their village 942 miles away, where they could tend their family's land to at least feed themselves. But by August, with their landlord asking for rent and the construction sites of Pune reopening, they had no option but to return to the city. "We might die from corona, but if there is nothing to eat, we will die either way," said Prajapati.

As the sun rose, he walked out of the station into Pune, the most infected city in the most infected state in all of India. As of Aug. 18, India has officially recorded more than 2.7 million cases of COVID-19, putting it third in the world behind the U.S. and Brazil. But India is on track to overtake them both. "I fully expect that at some point, unless things really change course, India will have more cases than any other place in the world," says Dr. Ashish Jha, director of Harvard's Global Health Institute. With a population of 1.3 billion, "there is a lot of room for exponential growth."

THE PANDEMIC HAS already reshaped India beyond imagination. Its economy, which has grown every year for the past 40, was faltering even before the lockdown, and the International Monetary Fund now predicts it will shrink by 4.5% this year. Many of the hundreds of millions of people lifted out of extreme poverty by decades of growth are now at risk



in more ways than one. Like Prajapati, large numbers had left their villages in recent years for new opportunities in India's booming metropolises. But though their labor has propelled their nation to become the world's fifth largest economy, many have been left destitute by the lockdown. Gaps in India's welfare system meant millions of internal migrant workers couldn't get government welfare payments or food. Hundreds died, and many more burned through the meager savings they had built up over years of work.

Now, with India's economy reopening even as the virus shows no sign of slowing, economists are worried about how fast India can recover—and what happens to the poorest in the meantime. "The best-case scenario is two years of very deep economic decline," says Jayati Ghosh, chair of the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. "There are at least 100 million people just above the poverty line. All of them will fall below it."



In some ways Prajapati, 35, was a lucky man. He has lived and worked in Pune since the age of 16, though like many laborers, he regularly sends money home to his village and returns every year to help with the harvest. Over the years, his remittances have helped his father build a four-room house. When the lockdown began, he even sent his family half of the \$132 he had in savings. The \$66 Prajapati had left was still more than many had at all, and enough to survive for three weeks. His landlord let him defer his rent payments. Two weeks into the lockdown, when Modi asked citizens in a video message to turn off their lights and light candles for nine minutes at 9 p.m. in a show of national solidarity, Prajapati was enthusiastic, lighting small oil lamps and placing them at shrines in his room and outside his door. “We were very happy to do it,” he said. “We thought that perhaps this will help with corona.”

Other migrant workers weren’t so enthusiastic. For those whose daily wages paid for their evening

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Prajapati gives his family’s details to local officials at Pune’s main train station on Aug. 5

meals, the lockdown had an immediate and devastating effect. When factories and construction sites closed because of the pandemic, many bosses—who often provide their temporary employees with food and board—threw everyone out onto the streets. And because welfare is administered at a state level in India, migrant workers are ineligible for benefits like food rations anywhere other than in their home state. With no food or money, and with train and bus travel suspended, millions had no choice but to immediately set off on foot for their villages, some hundreds of miles away. By mid-May, 3,000 people had died from COVID-19, but at least 500 more had died “distress deaths,” including those due to hunger, road accidents and lack of access to medical facilities, according to a study by the Delhi-based Society for Social and Economic Research. “It was very clear there had been a complete lack of planning and thought to the implications of switching off the economy for the vast majority of Indian workers,” says Yamini Aiyar, president of the Centre for Policy Research, a Delhi think tank.

Although Indian policymakers have long been aware of the extent to which the economy relies on informal migrant labor—there are an estimated 40 million people who regularly travel within the country for work—the lockdown brought this long-invisible class of people into the national spotlight. “Something that caught everyone by surprise is how large our migrant labor force is and how they fall between all the cracks in the social safety net,” says Arvind Subramanian, Modi’s former chief economic adviser, who left government in 2018. Modi was elected in 2014 after a campaign focused on solving India’s development problems, but under his watch, economic growth slid from 8% in 2016 to 5% last year, while flagship projects, like making sure everyone in the country has a bank account, have hit roadblocks. “The truth is, India needs migration very badly,” Subramanian says. “It’s a source of dynamism and an escalator for lots of people to get out of poverty. But if you want to get that income improvement for the poor back, you need to make sure the social safety net works better for them.”

The wide-scale economic disruption caused by the lockdown has disproportionately affected women. Because 95% of employed women work in India’s informal economy, many lost their jobs, even as the burden remained on them to take care of household responsibilities. Many signed up for India’s rural employment scheme, which guarantees a set number of hours of unskilled manual labor. Others sold jewelry or took on debts to pay for meals. “The COVID situation multiplied the burden on women both as economic earners and as caregivers,” says Ravi Verma of the Delhi-based International Center for Research on Women. “They are the frontline defenders of the family.”



▲
Health care workers check a woman's temperature and oxygen saturation in a Pune slum on Aug. 10

But the rural employment guarantee does not extend to urban areas. In Dharavi, a sprawling slum in Mumbai, Rameela Parmar worked as domestic help in three households before the lockdown. But the families told her to stop coming and held back her pay for the past four months. To support her own family, she was forced to take daily wage work painting earthen pots, breathing fumes that make her feel sick. “People have suffered more because of the lockdown than [because of] corona,” Parmar says. “There is no food and no work—that has hurt people more.”

Girls were hit hard too. For Ashwini Pawar, a bright-eyed 12-year-old, the pandemic meant the end of her childhood. Before the lockdown, she was an eighth-grade student who enjoyed school and wanted to be a teacher someday. But her parents were pushed into debt by months of unemployment, forcing her to join them in looking for daily wage work. “My school is shut right now,” said Pawar, clutching the corner of her shawl under a bridge in

Pune where temporary workers come to seek jobs. “But even when it reopens I don’t think I will be able to go back.” She and her 13-year-old sister now spend their days at construction sites lifting bags of sand and bricks. “It’s like we’ve gone back 10 years or more in terms of gender-equality achievements,” says Nitya Rao, a gender and development professor who advises the U.N. on girls’ education.

In an attempt to stop the economic nosedive, Modi shifted his messaging in May. “Corona will remain a part of our lives for a long time,” he said in a televised address. “But at the same time, we cannot allow our lives to be confined only around corona.” He announced a relief package worth \$260 billion, about 10% of the country’s GDP. But only a fraction of this came as extra handouts for the poor, with the majority instead devoted to tiding over businesses. In the televised speech announcing the package, Modi spoke repeatedly about making India a self-sufficient economy. It was this that made Prajapati lose hope of

ever getting government support. “Modiji said that we have to become self-reliant,” he said, still referring to the Prime Minister with an honorific suffix. “What does that mean? That we can only depend on ourselves. The government has left us all alone.”

By the time the lockdown began to lift in June, Prajapati’s savings had run out. His government ID card listed his village address, so he was not able to access government food rations, and he found himself struggling to buy food for his family. Three times, he visited a public square where a local nonprofit was handing out meals. On June 6, he finally left Pune for his family’s village, Khazurhat. He had been forced to borrow from relatives the \$76 for tickets for his wife, brother and himself. But having heard the stories of migrants making deadly journeys back, he was thankful to have found a safe way home.

MEANWHILE, THE VIRUS had been spreading across India, despite the lockdown. The first hot spots were India’s biggest cities. In Pune, Kashinath Kale, 44, was admitted to a public hospital with the virus on July 4, after waiting in line for nearly four hours. Doctors said he needed a bed with a ventilator, but none were available. His family searched in vain for six days, but no hospital could provide one. On July 11, he died in an ambulance on the way to a private hospital, where his family had finally located a bed in an intensive-care unit with a ventilator. “He knew he was going to die,” says Kale’s wife Sangeeta, holding a framed photograph of him. “He was in a lot of pain.”

By June, almost every day saw a record for daily confirmed cases. And as COVID-19 moved from early hot spots in cities toward rural areas of the country where health care facilities are less well equipped, public-health experts expressed concern, noting India has only 0.55 hospital beds per 1,000 people, far below Brazil’s 2.15 and the U.S.’s 2.80. “Much of India’s health infrastructure is only in urban areas,” says Ramanan Laxminarayan, director of the D.C.-based Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics and Policy. “As the pandemic unfolds, it is moving into states which have very low levels of testing and rural areas where the public-health infrastructure is weak.”

When he arrived back in his village of Khazurhat, Prajapati’s neighbors were worried he might have been infected in Pune, so medical workers at the district hospital checked his temperature and asked if he had any symptoms. But he was not offered a test. “While testing has been getting better in India, it’s still nowhere near where it needs to be,” says Harvard’s Jha.

Nevertheless, Modi has repeatedly touted India’s low case fatality rate—the number of deaths as a percentage of the number of cases—as proof that India has a handle on the pandemic. (As of Aug. 17, the rate was 1.9%, compared with 3.1% in the U.S.) “The average fatality rate in our country has been quite

low compared to the world ... and it is a matter of satisfaction that it is constantly decreasing,” Modi said in a televised videoconference on Aug. 11. “This means that our efforts are proving effective.”

But experts say this language is dangerously misleading. “As long as your case numbers are increasing, your case fatality rate will continue to fall,” Jha says. When the virus is spreading exponentially, as it is currently in India, he explains, cases increase sharply but deaths, which lag weeks behind, stay low, skewing the ratio to make it appear that a low percentage are dying. “No serious public-health person believes this is an important statistic.” On the contrary, Jha says, it might give people false optimism, increasing the risk of transmission.

Modi’s move to lock down the country in March was met with a surge in approval ratings; many Indians praised the move as strong and decisive. But while other foreign leaders’ lockdown honeymoons eventually gave way to popular resentment, Modi’s ratings remained stratospheric. In some recent polls, they topped 80%.

The reason has much to do with his wider political project, which critics see as an attempt to turn India from a multifaith constitutional democracy into an authoritarian, Hindu-supremacist state. Since winning reelection with a huge majority in May 2019, Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the political wing of a much larger grouping of organizations whose stated mission is to turn India into a Hindu nation, has delivered on several long-held goals that excite its right-wing Hindu base at the expense of the country’s Muslim minority. (Hindus make up 80% of the population and Muslims 14%.) Last year the government revoked the autonomy of India’s only Muslim-majority state, Kashmir. And an opulent new temple is being built in Ayodhya—a site where many Hindus believe the deity Ram was born and where Hindu fundamentalists destroyed a mosque in 1992. After decades of legal wrangling and political pressure from the BJP, in 2019 the Supreme Court finally ruled a temple could be built in its place. On Aug. 5, Modi attended a televised ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone.

Still, before the pandemic, Modi was facing his most severe challenge yet, in the form of a monthslong nationwide protest movement. All over the country, citizens gathered at universities and public spaces, reading aloud the preamble of the Indian constitution, quoting Mohandas Gandhi and holding aloft the Indian tricolor. The protests began in December 2019 as resistance to a controversial law that would make it harder for Muslim immigrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh to

‘The best-case scenario is two years of very deep economic decline.’

Jayati Ghosh,
Centre for Economic Studies
and Planning, Jawaharlal
Nehru University

gain Indian citizenship. They morphed into a wider pushback against the direction of the country under the BJP. In local Delhi elections in February, the BJP campaigned on a platform of crushing the protests but ended up losing seats. Soon after, riots broke out in the capital; 53 people were killed, 38 of them Muslims. (Hindus were also killed in the violence.) Police failed to intervene to stop Hindu mobs roaming around Muslim neighborhoods looking for people to kill, and in some cases they themselves joined mob attacks on Muslims, according to a Human Rights Watch report.

“During those hundred days, I thought India had changed forever,” says Harsh Mander, a prominent civil rights activist and the director of the Centre for Equity Studies, a Delhi think tank, of the nationwide dissent from December to March. But the lockdown put an abrupt end to the protests. Since then, the government has ramped up its crackdown on dissent. In June, Delhi police—who report to Modi’s Interior Minister, Amit Shah—accused Mander of inciting the Delhi riots; in charges against him, they quoted out of context portions of a speech he had made in

December calling on protesters to continue Gandhi’s legacy of nonviolent resistance, making it sound instead as if he was calling on them to be violent. Meanwhile, local BJP politician Kapil Mishra, who was filmed immediately before the riots giving Delhi police an ultimatum to clear the streets of protesters lest his supporters do it themselves, still walks free. “In my farthest imagination I couldn’t believe there would be this sort of repression,” Mander says.

A pattern was emerging. Police have also arrested at least 11 other protest leaders, including Safoora Zargar, a 27-year-old Muslim student activist who organized peaceful protests. She was accused of inciting the Delhi riots and charged with murder under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, a harsh antiterrorism law that authorities used at least

seven times during the lockdown to arrest activists or journalists. The law is described by Amnesty International as a “tool of harassment,” and by Zargar’s lawyer Ritesh Dubey, in an interview with TIME, as aimed at “criminalizing dissent.” As COVID-19 spread around the country, Zargar was kept in jail for two months, without bail, despite being 12 weeks pregnant at the time of her arrest. Restrictions in place to curb the spread of coronavirus, like not allowing lawyers to visit prisons, have also impacted protesters’ access to legal justice, Dubey says.

“The government used this health emergency to crush the largest popular movement this country has seen since independence,” Mander says. “The Indian Muslim has been turned into the enemy within. The

‘The government used this health emergency to crush the largest popular movement since independence.’

Harsh Mander,
civil rights activist



economy has tanked, there is mass hunger, infections are rising and rising, but none of that matters. Modi has been forgiven for everything else. This normalization of hate is almost like a drug. In the intoxication of this drug, even hunger seems acceptable.”

Close to going hungry, Prajapati says the Modi administration has provided little relief for people like him. “If we have not gotten anything from the government, not even a sack of rice, then what can we say to them?” he says. “I don’t have any hope from the government.”

Still, a change in government would be too much for Prajapati, a devout Hindu and a Modi supporter, who backs the construction of the temple of Ram in Ayodhya and cheered on the BJP when it revoked



the autonomy of Kashmir. “There is no one else like Modi who we can put our faith in,” he says. “At least he has done some good things.”

PRAJAPATI REMAINED IN KHAZURHAT from June until August, working his family’s acre of farmland where they grow rice, wheat, potatoes and mustard. But there was little other work available, and the yield from their farm was not sufficient to support the family. Now \$267 in debt to employers and relatives, he decided to return to Pune along with his wife and brother. Worried about reports of rising cases in the city, his usually stoic father cried as he waved his son off from the village. On his journey, Prajapati carried 44 lb. of wheat and 22 lb. of

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*Workers push
the body of
a COVID-19
patient into
the furnace
of Yerawada
crematorium
in Pune on
Aug. 11*

rice, which he hoped would feed his family until he could find construction work.

On the evening of his return, Prajapati cleaned his home, cooked dinner from what he had carried back from the village and began calling contractors to look for work. The pandemic had set him back at least a year, he said, and it would take him even longer to pay back the money he owed. The stamp on his hand he’d received at the station, stating that he was to self-quarantine for seven days, had already faded. Prajapati was planning to work as soon as he could. “Whether the lockdown continues or not, whatever happens, we have to live here and earn some money,” he said. “We have to find a way to survive.”
—With reporting by MADELINE ROACHE/LONDON □

**‘WE DESERVE
BETTER.’**

Nour Saliba, 27, in her apartment in the Mar Mikhael neighborhood on Aug. 6, two days after the explosion destroyed Beirut’s port, visible through her blown-out window. “I only lost my home. I am one of the lucky ones who still have their family and friends by their side,” she says. “We are all traumatized, but we are also burnt-out.”





World

AFTER THE EXPLOSION

Abandoned by the government that
left a bomb on their doorstep, Beirut
tries to summon the energy for change

**Photographs by
Myriam Boulos for TIME**

By Karl Vick

For three decades, the most reliable feature of Lebanon's government was its relentless decline.

Here was a country so brazenly corrupt, the World Bank abandoned its usual diplomatic language in 2015, declaring it “increasingly governed by bribery and nepotism practices, failing to deliver basic human services.” Among ordinary people, the lived reality of Lebanese politics produced a gall that rose like the stench of the garbage that has accumulated on the capital's streets because officials cannot figure out where to put it. In October, the announcement of higher taxes triggered gigantic daily protests across the country. But they have not yet led to any substantial change.

The question now is whether the catastrophic explosion of Aug. 4, which wiped away more than 220 lives and the homes of 300,000 people in Beirut, will ultimately take down Lebanon's unique political system. The country's constitution—which guarantees government positions to 18 separate religious sects—was intended to balance the interests and needs of a diverse, cosmopolitan nation. In reality, it provides semipermanent employment for self-dealing elites in political parties that look after themselves, rather than a greater good.

Which is how 2,750 metric tons of ammonium nitrate had languished since 2013 in a port warehouse in the center of a city of 2.4 million people. “We have been living next to an atomic bomb for six years. We stroll around, we walk by it, but we know nothing about it,” says resident Jad Estephan, of what produced one of the largest man-made (nonnuclear) explosions in global history. “How can the people in charge be this conscienceless?”

FOR A WEEK after the blast, photographer Myriam Boulos moved through the wreckage of her native city, documenting an aftermath nearly as extraordinary as the explosion: soldiers and police standing idle while ordinary people bent to the task of clearing debris. (“They carry guns,” says Boulos. “They don't help with anything.”) As she photographed, she also asked questions. “It's important that we tell our own stories,” she says. “At the end of the day, the country is people.”

Citizens complain about their government in every nation, but few have better cause than the Lebanese. In a country that made its national symbol a tree, “the Lebanese people had to put out fires that were devastating our forests because our government was unable to do its job,” Nour Saliba told Boulos, recalling a series of forest fires last October. It was the month that daily demonstrations erupted in the capital. Protesters demanded an end to corruption and a new constitution.

The pandemic was still months away, but misrule had already sent the country's economy into free fall, and almost half the 6.8 million residents (including 1.5 million Syrian refugees) lived in poverty. After two weeks of protests in October, Prime Minister





FIRST ROW

(1) Hatem Imam and Maya Moumne of Studio Safar, a design and communications agency, say the disaster “effectively eradicated any semblance of normalcy and, with it, any remnant of decency”; (2) a framed portrait of Jesus inside a damaged apartment; (3) Jad Estephan, who lost an eye in protests last year, has his hair cut by Kevin Obeid on Aug. 7. “I wanted to use my skills to help people around me,” Obeid says



SECOND ROW

(1) Dodging tear-gas canisters at an Aug. 8 antigovernment protest; (2) Riad Hussein al Hussein and his wife Fatima al Abid, assisting with cleanup of the Mar Mikhael area where he was injured days earlier. “I wanted to help like I had been helped,” he says; (3) people gather on balconies during the Aug. 8 protest



THIRD ROW

(1) Joseph Sfeir and his sister Mona. His reflex on Aug. 4 was to save his grandchildren—the reasons he came back years ago from France (they were uninjured); (2) a cactus and broken windows; (3) Angelique Sabounjian was hit by glass at a coffee shop in the Gemmayze area; Cherif Kanaan found her in “bad shape” at an overwhelmed hospital and stayed by her side until he “was confident that she was in good hands.”

A CITY UPENDED

The blast, estimated at one-tenth the size of the atomic explosion at Hiroshima, sent a wave of destruction six miles across a city already reeling from shortages of food, water and electricity. Cleanup efforts have been left to volunteers, with authorities all but invisible.



Saad Hariri resigned. His replacement stepped down on Aug. 10 after the protests, which had dwindled during the pandemic, resumed with a seething new anger. “The explosion, it cannot *not* define us, in a way,” says Boulos. “Of course it’s a turning point.”

RIAD HUSSEIN AL HUSSEIN was buying vegetables in the city’s Mar Mikhael neighborhood when he was knocked to the ground by the blast wave. He noticed he was bleeding from his head. Someone came to help him: “He used a cotton compress and pressed on my wounds for what seemed like a long time. He said that I had to endure the pain. And I endured.” That lasted about 20 minutes. “I really thought I was dying. I held my savior’s hand while he was helping me, and I asked him to say my goodbyes to my family,” he says.

Nothing binds people to one another like a trauma endured together. The explosion devastated three neighborhoods: a poor district east of the port; an enclave of Armenian Christians; and a gentrifying zone of older residents and young, artsy people. But with a damage radius of six miles, the entire city came apart. And then came together.

Cherif Kanaan told Boulos he was at home when he heard the explosion. “My mum, my brother and I ran toward each other very scared. A few seconds later the whole building started shaking like crazy and the massive blast hit us,” he says. “The look in their eyes will forever haunt me. We really thought we were gonna die.” He left the apartment and sprinted first to the home of his uncle, where everyone was O.K. From there, he ran from hospital to hospital, looking for people to help.



‘IT WAS A WAR ZONE.’

Andrea, a drag performer whose home was destroyed, has helped with a relief fund offering shelter, food and first aid to members of the LGBTQ community. “If we didn’t have our rights before,” he says, referring to the fact that same-sex relations in Lebanon can be punishable by up to a year in prison, “now what we have left is very little.”

He found them everywhere. He held a compress to a wounded nurse outside a destroyed hospital, then cut his hand lifting a metal pole out of the road. He helped an old man struggling with a bandage, and took off his shirt for a woman carrying two babies. Back at the ruined hospital, he saw a woman with a terrible wound on her face. Her name was Angelique. “I couldn’t quite get her family name at first because of her numb lips,” he says.

Kanaan took her phone, reassuring relatives who were calling constantly. In the mayhem, an ambulance appeared. He bundled Angelique into a scene that would stay with him: on a stretcher was a young girl named Alexandra, struggling to breathe, “her grandpa at the back, a lady doctor next to him, insufflating Alexandra, her dad with a broken left cheekbone, Angelique next to

him, myself, a wounded old lady in front of me, a wounded old man next to her behind the driver and a rescuer, I believe,” Kanaan says. Alexandra would not survive.

It was six days after the blast that Prime Minister Hassan Diab resigned, saying he wanted to stand with the people. The next day, one week to the minute after the explosion, citizens gathered in the wreckage of their capital. At 6:08 p.m., what moved through the air was not a blast wave but the Muslim call to prayer, and the peal of church bells.

“Let us hope that this catastrophe doesn’t destroy us even further but rather gives us a much needed strength,” says Estephan. “Because this is our last chance. We must change today, or never.” —*With reporting by MYRIAM BOULOS/BEIRUT and MADELINE ROACHE/LONDON* □



ON THE EVENING OF FEB. 6, AS U.S. NEWS networks reported the death of a doctor in Wuhan, China, who had warned of a deadly new virus, thousands of Americans were tuning in to a different kind of show.

“The good news is I heard actually that you can’t get this if you’re white,” Nick Fuentes, a far-right political commentator, told viewers on his “America First” channel on the streaming platform DLive. “You’re only really susceptible to this virus if you’re Asian,” Fuentes continued. “I think we’ll be O.K.”

Fuentes, 22, a prolific podcaster who on his shows has compared the Holocaust to a cookie-baking operation, argued that the segregation of Black Americans “was better for them,” and that the

First Amendment was “not written for Muslims,” is doing better than O.K. during the COVID-19 pandemic. He’s part of a loose cohort of far-right provocateurs, white nationalists and right-wing extremists who have built large, engaged audiences on lesser-known platforms like DLive after being banned from mainstream sites for spreading hate speech and conspiracy theories.

The model can be lucrative. Viewers pay to watch the livestreams through subscriptions and donations, and the platform allows the content creators to keep most of the revenue. Fuentes appears to have earned more than \$140,000 off his DLive streams, cementing himself as the most viewed account on the platform, according to calculations provided to

TIME by a livestreaming analyst who was granted anonymity because of their work tracking these accounts. Fuentes is hardly alone. Eight of the 10 top earners on DLive this year as ranked by Social Blade, a social-media analytics website, are far-right commentators, white-nationalist extremists or conspiracy theorists.

The social disruption and economic dislocation caused by the virus—as well as the nationwide protests and civil unrest that followed the death of George Floyd in late May—has helped fuel this growing, shadowy “alt tech” industry. As public spaces shut down in March, millions of Americans logged online; the livestreaming sector soared 45% from March to April, according to a study by software sites StreamElements



A global pandemic, a summer of protests and the 2020 election have led to a windfall for extremists and conspiracy theorists

BY VERA BERGENGRUEN

and Arsenal.gg. As people became more socially isolated, many increasingly turned to pundits peddling misinformation, conspiracy theories and hate speech. And even as mainstream platforms cracked down on far-right propagandists, online audiences grew. Over the past five months, more than 50 popular accounts reviewed by TIME on sites like DLive have multiplied their viewership and raked in tens of thousands of dollars in online currency by insisting COVID-19 is fake or exaggerated, encouraging followers to resist lockdown orders and broadcasting racist tropes during the nationwide protests over police brutality. Many of these users, including Fuentes, had been banned by major social-media platforms like YouTube for violating

policies prohibiting hate speech. But this so-called deplatforming merely pushed them to migrate to less-regulated portals, where some of them have attracted bigger audiences and gamed algorithms to make even more money. In addition, clips of their broadcasts on less-trafficked sites still frequently make it onto YouTube, Twitter and other mainstream platforms, essentially serving as free advertising for their streams elsewhere, experts say.

As social-media giants like YouTube, Twitter and Facebook target hate speech and misinformation, sites like DLive seem to be turning a blind eye, former users and employees say, recognizing that much of their traffic and revenue comes from these accounts. “They care more about having good numbers than weeding

these people out,” a former employee of DLive, who was granted anonymity because he still works in the livestreaming sector, tells TIME. (DLive did not respond to multiple requests for comment.)

Which means ordinary users on gaming and streaming platforms, many of them teenagers, are often one click away from white-nationalist content. Many of these far-right personalities allege they are being unfairly censored for conservative political commentary or provocative humor, not hate speech. Most of these viewers won’t respond to streamers’ often cartoonish calls to action, like the “film your hospital” movement in April meant to show that no patients were there, thus “proving” that COVID-19 was fake. But this murky ecosystem of casual

Technology

viewers, right-wing trolls—and the occasional diehard acolyte—creates a real challenge for technology companies and law-enforcement agencies.

And it doesn't take much to trigger a tragedy. Over the past two years, terrorists inspired by online right-wing propaganda have livestreamed their own deadly attacks in New Zealand and Germany. In March 2019, a Florida man who had been radicalized by far-right media and online conspiracy theorists pleaded guilty to sending more than a dozen pipe bombs to prominent critics of President Donald Trump. A month later, a gunman armed with an AR-15 shot four people, killing one, in a synagogue in Poway, Calif., after allegedly posting a racist and anti-Semitic screed on the site 8chan. About three months later, a man killed 23 people at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, after posting a racist manifesto online, according to authorities.

With COVID-19 continuing to surge in parts of the country, ongoing protests over racial injustice and the upcoming 2020 U.S. presidential election, the next few months promise to offer fertile ground for bad actors in unmoderated virtual spaces. Far-right propagandists “are really capitalizing on this conspiratorial moment,” says Brian Friedberg, a senior researcher at the Harvard University Shorenstein Center’s Technology and Social Change Project. “Everyone’s locked inside while there is what they refer to as a ‘race war’ happening outside their windows that they are ‘reporting on,’ so this is prime content for white-nationalist spaces.”

The migration of far-right personalities to DLive illustrates how, despite mainstream platforms’ recent crackdowns, the incentives that govern this ecosystem are thriving. Anyone with an Internet connection can continue to leverage conspiracy theories, racism and misogyny for attention and money, experts say.

THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19 arrived during a period of reinvention for far-right propagandists in the aftermath of the white-nationalist “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017. Over the past three years, social-media

giants, which had endured criticism for giving extremists safe harbor, have increasingly attempted to mitigate hate speech on their sites. Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, as well as payment processors like PayPal and GoFundMe, have all shut down accounts run by far-right agitators, neo-Nazis and white supremacists. In late June, YouTube removed the accounts of several well-known figures, including David Duke, a former leader of the Ku Klux Klan, and Richard Spencer, a prominent white nationalist. Reddit,

Facebook and Amazon-owned streaming site Twitch also suspended dozens of users and forums for violating hate-speech guidelines.

But these purges hardly solved the problem. Many online extremists were on mainstream platforms like YouTube long enough to build a devoted

audience willing to follow them to new corners of the Internet. Some had long prepared for a crackdown by setting up copycat accounts across different platforms, like Twitch, DLive or TikTok. “These people build their brand on YouTube, and when they get demonetized or feel under threat they’ll set up backup channels on DLive or BitChute,” says Megan Squire, a computer scientist at Elon University who tracks online extremism. “They know it’s going to happen and plan ahead.”

While the suspensions by social-media companies have been effective at limiting the reach of some well-known personalities like conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, who was banned from YouTube, Facebook and Apple in 2018, others have quickly adapted. “Content creators are incredibly adept at gaming the systems so that they can still find and cultivate audiences,” says Becca Lewis, a researcher at Stanford University who studies far-right subcultures online, describing these efforts as a “game of whack-a-mole.” Many white-nationalist accounts have tied their ban to the right-wing narrative that conservatives are being silenced by technology companies. For platforms like DLive, becoming what their users consider “free speech” and “uncensored” alternatives can be lucrative.

“More speech also means more money for the platform, and less content moderation means less of an expense,” says Lewis.

The prospect of being pushed off mainstream social-media, video-streaming and payment platforms has also prompted extremists to become more sophisticated about the financial side of the business. While Twitch takes a 50% cut from livestreamers’ earnings and YouTube takes 45%, platforms like DLive allow content creators to keep 90% of what they make. And as many found themselves cut off from mainstream payment services like PayPal, GoFundMe and Patreon, they began to embrace digital currencies.

DLive was founded in December 2017 by Chinese-born and U.S.-educated entrepreneurs Charles Wayn and Cole Chen, who made no secret of their ambition to build a platform that rivaled Twitch. They described the site as a general-interest streaming platform, focused on everything from “e-sports to lifestyle, crypto and news.” But two things set it apart from its competitors: it did not take a cut of the revenue generated by its streamers, and it issued an implicit promise of a less moderated, more permissive space.

DLive’s first big coup came in April 2019 when it announced an exclusive streaming deal with Felix Kjellberg, known as PewDiePie. In just two months, DLive’s total number of users grew by 67%. At the time, Kjellberg was the most popular individual creator on YouTube, with more than 93 million subscribers and his own controversial history. In 2018, he came under fire for making anti-Semitic jokes and racist remarks, and more than 94,000 people signed a Change.org petition to ban his channel from YouTube for being a “platform for

white-supremacist content.” The petition noted that “the New Zealand mosque shooter mentioned PewDiePie by name and asked people to subscribe.”

DLive’s community guidelines theoretically prohibit “hate speech that directly attacks a person or group on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, disease, age, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity.” But it soon became apparent to both employees and users that executives were willing to ignore venomous content.

190

Number of accounts linked to white-supremacy groups removed by Facebook in early June

45%

Growth in the livestreaming sector from March to April, due to the pandemic

By early 2019, “political” shows were gaining traction on the site. Those programs devolved into “streams dedicated to white pride and a lot of anti-Semitism, entire streams talking about how Jewish people are evil,” says the former DLive employee who spoke to TIME, adding that moderators acted much more quickly when it came to copyright concerns. “Your stream would be taken down faster for streaming sports than saying you hate Jews.”

The employee recalls raising the matter with Wayn, noting how off-putting it was for new users coming to watch or broadcast streams of popular video games. According to the employee, Wayn explained that the company “didn’t want to get rid of these problematic streamers because they brought in numbers.” The founders knew they had to keep viewers because, as Wayn noted in a 2019 interview, if they wanted to “compete with Twitch on the same level and even take them down one day, DLive needs to match its scale.” Wayn did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

By June 2020, DLive seemed to be openly cultivating a right-of-center audience. On Twitter, it briefly changed its bio to read “All Lives Matter,” a right-wing rallying cry in response to Black Lives Matter. The site has increasingly become a haven for fanaticism, says Joan Donovan, the research director of Harvard’s Shorenstein Center. “Before, on YouTube, some of these people would do a dance with the terms of service,” she tells TIME. “But on DLive, the gloves are off, and it’s just full white-supremacist content with very few caveats.”

On the night of June 29, Fuentes had 56% of the site’s total viewership at 10 p.m., according to the review of the site’s analytics provided to TIME. An additional 39% was viewers of 22 other extremist personalities streaming their commentary. At one point on the night of Aug. 10, just 176 of the more than 15,000 viewers on the top 20 channels on the site were not watching accounts linked to far-right figures. Popular programming in recent months has included alarmist footage of racial-justice protests, antivaccine propaganda, conspiracies linking 5G networks to the spread of COVID-19 and calls to “make more white babies while quarantined.”

The company may be even more reliant

on those accounts now. Some users have left the site, complaining publicly about the virulent racism and anti-Semitism spilling over into regular channels and game streams. “DLive is a safe-haven for racists and alt-right streamers,” one user wrote on Twitter on June 22. “Seems to me DLive is the new platform for white supremacists,” wrote another, echoing complaints that it’s a “literal Nazi breeding ground” and “the place where racists don’t get deplatformed.”

THE MIGRATION of hate speech to far-flung corners of the Internet could make it harder to track, increasing the risk that it spills into the offline world. Experts say law-enforcement and national-security agencies are still unprepared to tackle right-wing extremism. They lack expertise not only in the rapidly evolving technology but also in the ideological ecosystem that has spawned a battery of far-right movements. The recently repackaged white-nationalist youth movement, with new names like “America First” or the “Groyppers,” looks more like “gussied-up campus conservatives,” as Friedberg of Harvard’s Shorenstein Center puts it, “so they are not triggering the same warning bells.”

Recent incidents show how this online environment that blends political commentary and hate speech can be dangerous. An 18-year-old accused of firebombing a Delaware Planned Parenthood clinic in January was identified through his Instagram profile, which contained far-right memes reflecting popular beliefs in the young white-nationalist movement, according to BuzzFeed News. In June, Facebook deactivated nearly 200 social-media accounts with ties to white-nationalist groups rallying members to attend Black Lives Matter protests, in some cases armed with weapons.

Analysts who track extremist recruitment online also warn that the pandemic may have long-term effects on young people who are now spending far more time on the Internet. Without the structure of school and social activities, many children and teenagers are spending hours a day in spaces where extremist content lurks alongside games and other benign entertainment, says Dana Coester, an associate

professor at West Virginia University who researches the impact of online white extremism on youth in Appalachia. It’s common, she notes, to see teenagers sharing Black Lives Matter messages alongside racist cartoons from popular Instagram accounts targeting middle schoolers. “So many parents I’ve spoken with say their kids are on devices until 3 in the morning,” she says. “I can’t begin to imagine how much damage can be done with kids that many hours a day marinating in really toxic content.”

Analysts warn that both U.S. law enforcement and big technology companies need to move quickly to hire experts who understand this new extremist ecosystem. Experts say the mainstream platforms’ recent purges are reactive: they patch yesterday’s problems instead of preventing future abuses, and focus on high-profile provocateurs instead of the underlying networks.

One solution may be to follow the money, as content creators migrate to new platforms in search of new financial opportunities. “[White supremacists] have become particularly assiduous at exploiting new methods of fundraising, often seeking out platforms that have not yet realized how extremists can exploit them,” said George Selim, senior vice president of programs of the Anti-Defamation League, in testimony before a House subcommittee in January. “When a new fundraising method or platform emerges, white supremacists can find a window of opportunity. These windows can, however, be shut if platforms promptly take countermeasures.”

On the evening of Aug. 11, Joe Biden’s pick of Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate dominated the news. “She hates white people,” Fuentes told viewers on DLive. “She is going to use the full weight of the federal government ... to destroy conservatives, to destroy America First, anybody that speaks up for white people.” NBC and ABC News—which have a combined 13 million subscribers on YouTube—had an average of 6,100 concurrent viewers watching their coverage. Fuentes’ show had 9,000. —*With reporting by* ALEJANDRO DE LA GARZA/NEW YORK

90%
Percentage
of revenue that
content creators
get to keep
on DLive

Health

When COVID Doesn't Go





Away

For some patients, the disease lingers for months. Scientists are studying the magnitude of the problem—and how to respond

By Jamie Ducharme

KAYLA BRIM LAUGHED WHEN SHE learned it could take 10 days to get her COVID-19 test results back. “I thought, O.K., well, within 10 days I should be fine,” she remembers.

That was on July 2. More than a month later, Brim is still far from fine.

Before the pandemic, the 28-year-old from Caldwell, Idaho, juggled home-schooling her two kids with her work as a makeup artist—she was supposed to open her own salon in July. Now, she suffers daily from shortness of breath, exhaustion, excruciating headaches, brain fog, neuropathy, high blood pressure, and loss of taste and smell. She feels like “a little old lady,” completely knocked out by simple tasks like making lunch for her children. She’s working just enough to help pay the bills and the lease on her empty salon, but she has no idea when she’ll be able to work full-time again, and no idea how she and her husband will manage financially if she can’t. “Half of my day is spent trying to sleep, and the other half of it is trying to pretend like I’m O.K.—and I don’t know when I’ll be O.K.,” Brim says.

This is “long haul” COVID-19. Even young, healthy people can become long-haulers (as many call themselves), left unable to work, lead a normal life or, some days, get out of bed. The consequences for each individual can be devastating—and at scale, they’re staggering. Over time, long-haul coronavirus may force hundreds of thousands of people out of work and into doctor’s offices, shouldering the double burden of lost wages and hefty medical bills for the indeterminate future. To treat them, the health care system may have to stretch already thin resources to the breaking point.

It’s going to be “an impending tsunami of patients ... on top of all the [usual] chronic care that we do,” says Dr. Zijian Chen, medical director of the Center for Post-COVID Care at New York City’s Mount Sinai Health System, one of the country’s only clinics devoted to caring for patients in the aftermath of coronavirus infection. “At some point, it becomes very unsustainable—meaning, the system will collapse.”

< *With her energy sapped after an infection for COVID-19, Brim, left, spends much of her time in bed these days*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANGIE SMITH FOR TIME

Health

WHEN MOST PEOPLE think of COVID-19, they imagine two possibilities: a flu-like illness that clears on its own, or a life-threatening condition that requires ventilation and a hospital stay. It's not hard to see how the latter scenario leads to long-term damage. Mechanical ventilation is incredibly hard on the lungs, and days or weeks spent sedated in a hospital bed can sap physical and mental strength. In a small study published in 2011, nearly all the participants who needed intensive treatment for a severe lung injury reported decreased physical ability and quality of life five years after leaving the hospital.

Some took years to return to work. Hospitalized coronavirus patients may face a similar fate.

But with COVID-19, it's not just the sickest who face a long road back. A July 24 report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that out of about 300 nonhospitalized but symptomatic COVID-19 patients, 35% were still experiencing symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath and fatigue up to three weeks after diagnosis. (By contrast, more than 90% of nonhospitalized influenza patients fully recover within two weeks.) Recovery from COVID-19 can be a drawn-out process for patients of all ages, genders and prior levels of health, "potentially leading to prolonged absence from work, studies or other activities," the report noted.

The CDC's surveyors only checked up on people a few weeks after they tested positive for coronavirus, but emerging evidence suggests a large subset of patients are sick for months, not just weeks, on end. Dr. Michael Peluso, who is studying long-term COVID-19 outcomes at the University of California, San Francisco, says about 20% of his research participants are still sick one to four months after diagnosis.

The implications of that problem are enormous. If even 10% of the more than 5 million (and counting) confirmed COVID-19 patients in the U.S. suffer symptoms that last this long, half a

million people are already or could soon become ill for the foreseeable future.

When Mount Sinai opened its Center for Post-COVID Care in May, the hospital advertised it as the first in the country; since then, a handful of others have opened in states including Colorado, Indiana and Illinois. Mount Sinai's clinic was modeled after the practice the hospital opened to treat survivors of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. "It's very similar. It's a new group, and they need special care," Chen says. The biggest difference, he says, is the size of the group. Significantly more people have survived COVID-19 than

'At some point, it becomes very unsustainable—meaning, the system will collapse.'

DR. ZIJIAN CHEN,
Center for Post-COVID Care
at Mount Sinai Health System

were directly affected by 9/11. Mount Sinai has only scratched the surface of that demand, treating about 300 people so far. The wait time for new patients extends into October.

THE CHALLENGE FOR DOCTORS like Chen is that nobody really knows why long-haul COVID-19 happens, let alone how to treat it. Other viral diseases with long-term symptoms, like HIV/AIDS, offer some clues, but every day in the clinic is essentially uncharted territory.

One hypothesis is that the virus persists in the body in some form, causing continuing problems. Another is that coronavirus pushes the immune system into overdrive, and it stays revving even after the acute infection passes. But at this point, it's not clear which theory, if either, is right, or why certain patients recover in days and others suffer for months, Peluso says.

Plus, just as there's huge variation in acute COVID-19 symptoms, not all long-term patients have the same issues. A researcher from the Indiana University School of Medicine in July surveyed 1,500 long-haulers from Survivor Corps, an online COVID-19 support group. They reported almost 100 distinct symptoms, from anxiety and fatigue to muscle cramps and breathing problems. A *JAMA Cardiology* study published in July suggested many recently recovered patients have lingering heart abnormalities, with inflammation the most common.

Some long-term COVID-19 patients have abnormal test results or damage to a specific organ, giving doctors clues as to how they should be treated. But for others, there's no obvious reason for their suffering, making treatment an educated

*Clockwise from top left:
Brim, her husband Taylor and
their two sons Titus and Declan*





WE ARE BEING TESTED. AND WE WILL TEST BACK.

This virus is testing us—and testing people on the front lines most of all. Abbott is getting new tests into their hands to deliver the critical results they need. And until this fight is over, we will never quit. Because they never quit.



guessing game. “We don’t know why they [still] have symptoms. We don’t know if our techniques are working,” Chen says. “We don’t know if they’re going to get back to 100%, or 90%, or 80%.”

With little evidence, some doctors turn coronavirus long-haulers away or try to convince them their symptoms are psychological. Marcus Tomoff, a 28-year-old in Tampa who is in his second month of debilitating fatigue, back and chest pain, nausea and anxiety after a bout of coronavirus, says he hasn’t been taken seriously by friends or even his doctors. “Several times I’ve cried in front of my doctors, and they say, ‘You need to deal with this, you’re young,’” he says.

The haphazard testing system in the U.S. has further complicated patients’ searches for care. Mount Sinai’s Post-COVID Center, for example, accepts only patients who’ve tested positive for COVID-19 or its antibodies, and Chen fears potential patients who can’t get tested or get false-negative results may be falling through the cracks. The best he can do right now is refer them to specialists and hope they find a doctor who can help.

FOR 46-YEAR-OLD Andrea Ceresa, getting better is a full-time job—minus the paycheck. Ceresa had to leave her job managing a New Jersey dental office after she got sick in mid-April with what she and her doctors believe was COVID-19. (She tested negative for the virus and its antibodies, but her doctors think they were false negatives.) More than 100 days later, she’s in regular contact with her primary-care physician, an integrative-care doctor and a rotating cast of specialists who she hopes can treat her lingering gastrointestinal problems, hearing and vision issues, weight and hair loss, heart palpitations, migraines, brain fog, neuropathy, fatigue, nausea and anxiety. She finally got into a post-COVID program after weeks of waiting, but she’s mostly been left to cobble together her own care team.

Ceresa has paid for her own health insurance through the federal COBRA program since she stopped working, which has put her in a precarious financial state. “I have a stack of bills, and I just am starting to open them now,” she says. “I’m definitely, at this point, going to be in the hole thousands of dollars. I’m collecting unemployment. I know I’m going to have

to go on disability.” Even then, she says, it may not be enough to pay her bills.

There may soon be a lot of patients like Ceresa, says Dr. Bhakti Patel, a pulmonologist at University of Chicago Medicine who studies the long-term effects of critical care. Patel says patients with long-term issues after surviving coronavirus may face a number of obstacles. Patients who remain too sick to return to work (or who are unemployed because of the economic climate) may lose employer-sponsored health insurance at the moment they need it most. Younger patients who do not qualify for Medicare but need public insurance may be funneled toward Medicaid, which Patel says is “already overstretched.” The services long-haul coronavirus patients may need—like physical therapy and mental-health care—can be difficult to access, especially via public insurance networks like Medicaid, Patel says. That bottleneck will only get worse if more people need public aid.

As patients with an emerging disease, long-haulers also need “an intensity of outpatient care and expertise” that goes beyond what the average primary-care physician can offer, Peluso says. Very few doctors are experienced in treating long-haul symptoms—and even among those who are, *experienced* is a relative term. “This wasn’t a specialty three months ago,” says Chen.

People who can’t get into a dedicated post-COVID program may need to try a slew of specialists before they find one who can help, an expensive and tiring game of trial and error. (That’s assuming patients can get appointments with specialists like pulmonologists and neurologists, who can be hard to come by outside of densely populated areas.) The sickest long-haul patients may also require pricey and difficult-to-access rehab or in-home care, on top of other medical costs. If a family member has to give up work to become a caregiver, that can also have serious economic consequences.

Some long-haulers will likely have to file for disability benefits, a byzantine system of its own that’s at risk of becoming overwhelmed. From 2008 to 2017, only

about a third of people who applied for disabled-worker benefits in the U.S. were initially approved, according to Social Security Administration (SSA) data. It can be especially difficult for patients without a clear diagnosis or cause of illness, since the SSA requires claimants to provide “objective medical evidence” of an impairment.

With few other resources available, thousands of long-haulers have sought help from virtual support groups like Survivor Corps and Body Politic, where

members talk about their symptoms and celebrate signs of recovery. Programs like COVID Bootcamp 101, an online rehab series run by the nonprofit Pulmonary Wellness

Foundation, are also trying to fill gaps in care. The scientific community is doing its best to catch up, but Chen says the government may need to help develop long-term solutions that address the economic consequences of long-term coronavirus symptoms, like a medical safety-net program (as it has done for HIV/AIDS patients) or financial assistance for patients (as it did for 9/11 survivors).

Without clear answers about what happens next, all doctors can offer the public is yet another plea to take coronavirus seriously—because right now, the only surefire way not to become a long-hauler is to not get COVID-19 at all.

That doesn’t help people like Ceresa, though. After more than 100 days of feeling sick, she says she’s still “baffled” that this happened to her, an active and healthy woman who’s been a vegan for decades. She stayed home all April except for a couple trips to the grocery store and still had her life destroyed by the virus. She can’t work, sing in her band or plan her wedding after getting engaged a few weeks before the pandemic hit. She tries to comfort herself by thinking about ways it could be worse—it could be cancer—but the truth is, things are bad. “You try to be hopeful and think somehow, miraculously, you’re going to be better, and it doesn’t happen,” she says. “I can’t imagine living like this for another day, let alone the rest of my life.”

At this point, no one knows if she’ll have to. □

‘I can’t imagine living like this for another day, let alone the rest of my life.’

ANDREA CERESA,
dental office manager
and COVID-19 patient

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Essay

What does
KINDNESS
look like?

YOUR EFFORTS TO HELP DISABLED PEOPLE MAY NOT
ALWAYS HAVE THE INTENDED EFFECT

BY REBEKAH TAUSSIG

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESS T. DUGAN FOR TIME



*Taussig outside her
home in Kansas City,
Mo., on Aug. 6*

Essay

I AM A MAGNET FOR KINDNESS. LIKE THE CENTER of a black hole, my body attracts every good deed from across the universe to the foot of my wheelchair. I move through parking lots and malls, farmers' markets and airports, bookstores and buffets, and people scramble to my aid.

O.K., so there are plenty of people who don't seem to notice me, and some people who are actually repelled. They look down, pull their bag or their child closer to them, draw their legs up to their chest as I roll by. (Yeah, it doesn't feel great.) But it's the abundance of kindness that gets me all tangled. It's the fly that won't stop buzzing, won't hold still long enough for me to swat it, won't die.

It's harmless, really. What damage can a tiny fly do? But then why do I feel like tearing down the house every time I hear its familiar buzz?

I've been paralyzed since receiving cancer treatments as a toddler, and I started using a wheelchair in first grade, so I've had 30 years to learn just how capable I am and just how often people assume I'm helpless.

As a culture, Americans are convinced that disability is something they've figured out. How could ableism exist when we've memorized the rules? Don't say the *R* word; don't make fun; disability doesn't define anyone; try to be helpful; and the rule that guides them all: be kind. I've seen so many people perform these creeds in one form or another.

Like the folks who try to do me a favor by keeping me separate from this disabled body of mine: *All I see when I look at you is a beautiful woman. I don't even notice your wheelchair!* It's meant as a kindness, but it feels like erasure.

I think I understand how it happens: if you live in a community where disability is framed as tragic and inferior, then claiming not to see that so-called defect feels like a favor. We try to extract the disability from the person, because we think disability is ugly, and the rules tell us this separation is nice. But do we attempt to extract thinness, Ivy League education or wealth from a person? Of course not. We see these characteristics as inherently positive. Maybe individuals hold on to these features as part of their identity, maybe they don't, but as a culture, we don't take it upon ourselves to graciously inform people that we see past their fit bodies, fancy diplomas and piles of cash. There is no urgency to ignore thinness, no discomfort in recognizing education, no knee-jerk desire to erase wealth. But deep within our cultural understanding of what it means to be a human with a body, we position disability below ability and at odds with health, beauty, wholeness, success and happiness.

Time and time again, people have become

uncomfortable with or hostile to the stories I share about sitting on the receiving end of "kindness." Maybe it's because so many of us claim "kindness" as one of the most important qualities a human can possess. Disrupting our understanding of kindness is a direct threat to our sense of self and understanding of the world around us. But as a veteran Kindness Magnet, I've found people's attempts to Be Kind can be anything from healing to humiliating, helpful to traumatic.

AT LEAST EIGHT TIMES A DAY, I yank and throw, pull and twist my wheelchair in and out of my beat-up 2007 Toyota Corolla, an ordeal that takes about 30 seconds. On this particular day, I'm assembling my chair when I hear a man yelling at me from across the parking lot. It's safe to assume he wants to help me, and I have decades of data to attest that he will not be able to make this routine even the slightest bit easier for me.

I've got the body of the chair on the pavement by the driver's seat, and I'm reaching into the back seat for the first wheel. I'm swift and strong. I'm sure it must look difficult for someone who's never seen it, but I don't falter. The wheel is firmly in my grip when I catch a glimpse of the man running toward me.

"Don't fall, don't fall!" he shouts.

"Oh, I'm fine!" I say. "See?" I begin to slip the first wheel into position.

The man sways on his feet, seemingly torn. I might look fine, but surely I'm not. I assemble the second wheel, flip the chair to face me and stand up to transfer. "Don't fall!" he cries again. I hop into my seat and grab my bags.

I'm no longer trying to be pleasant. I've used my words and demonstrated through action: I'm fine. Why doesn't he see that? He rushes to open the door for me. I roll my eyes.

THE MAIN MESSAGING surrounding disabled people is that we're supposed to Be Nice to them (or maybe its close cousin, Don't Be Mean). Regardless of our age, socioeconomic background or education, we learn that disabled people need protection and assistance. If a disabled person is being made fun of, the Kind Person intervenes to say, "Stop that!" Or better yet, punches the Bully in the face and yells "Scram!" while the Bully scuttles away.

This is the power of the one-dimensional, deeply embedded ableist script in our culture. Some bodies are Victims, others are Heroes. Like royal weddings or animals of different species cuddling, we cannot get enough of stories that involve kindness and disability. There is even a whole genre of "news stories" on the Internet about cheerleaders and football stars



asking disabled kids to the prom: “High School Football Star Becomes Internet Sensation After Taking His Disabled Best Friend to Prom and Leading Her in a Slow Dance” (*Daily Mail*), “This Student With a Disability Got Asked to the Prom in the Sweetest Way” (BuzzFeed) and “‘When Pigs Fly’: Girl Asks Boy With Special Needs to Prom” (NBC4 Columbus).

In 2018, 15-year-old Clara Daly was on a flight when she heard the call, “Does anyone know American Sign Language?” She learned that the flight included a deaf and blind passenger, Tim Cook, and the airline staff had no way to communicate with him. Daly had started learning sign language about a year before, and as she signed words into his palm, she became the conduit between Cook and the rest of his surroundings. There were at least four photos from their encounter posted on Facebook. In three of them, the camera focuses on Daly. Her blond hair and glowing cheeks look almost otherworldly under the light pouring in from the windows. Cook’s face is obscured. We see the back of his head, the side of his beard.

In an interview with his local news station, Cook said he was used to isolation and thanked Daly for reaching out to him. This detail added a sprinkling of heartbreak to the story and remained unexamined. The title of the article wasn’t “Deaf and Blind Man Sheds Light on Social Exclusion for Disabled Communities.” The article didn’t include a whiff of interest in solving the problem of disability stigma or

social ostracism or even how to make airplanes more accessible for disabled folks. Instead, the events were transformed into a gooey celebration of the 45 minutes when one pretty girl talked with one disabled man so that its readers could get the feeling of being wrapped in a hug.

I get it. The world is dark and scary, and we need more feel-good stories. These articles didn’t try to fix the problem of ableism, but are they really so bad? Isn’t any form of being there for another person worth celebrating?

Well, here’s the problem: we have ignored the perspectives, stories and voices of disabled people for so long that their actual needs, feelings and experiences are hardly acknowledged. We look through the eyes of nondisabled people so regularly that we forget to ask even one of the many questions hovering around the disabled recipients of “help.” Did you want anyone’s help? Was it even helpful? What needs did you have that remained ignored or misunderstood? What could be put into place so that you aren’t forced to be dependent on the kindness of a stranger who may or may not be there next time? Did you know you were being photographed? Did you want those images shared? How did this experience feel to you? How many times have you been put in this position before?

I’M ABOUT 17, and my boyfriend Sam and I are “leaders” for a weekend youth-group trip. We’re

▲
Taussig,
around
age 5, in
Manhattan,
Kans.



@sitting_pretty

Taussig shares photos and “mini memoirs” narrating her life, which includes her husband Micah and new baby Otto, on Instagram

scheduled to walk through some touristy caves that are clearly inaccessible, and as the group lines up, I mention that I’ll meet them by the exit.

“Bek! I’ll carry you!” Sam says. Sam carries me a lot, and usually it’s welcome and easy. But this time, I’m tired. Also, I don’t care about these caves.

“Sam, it’s like a mile long in there,” I say. “Don’t be ridiculous.”

“Aww, that’s nothing!” he says, flexing his biceps like a superhero.

“No, really. I’m tapping out of this one,” I say.

“Would you please just let me carry you?” Sam asks loudly. Other people are listening now.

“I really don’t want to,” I mumble.

Sam kneels in front of me. “Please let me carry you,” he says, quietly now.

“Aww,” say a few girls close behind us.

Why do I say yes? Who am I trying to please? What good do I think this will do?

One hundred feet in, I know I’ve made a mistake. My chest and cheek rest against Sam’s dampening back, and my arms and neck start to ache.

As we reach a tight corner, Sam bends down, and I see a flash behind us. I turn to see a girl winding her disposable camera. She continues to take pictures of Sam carrying me through the cave throughout the tour, more interested in the performance of hero and damsel than the caves themselves. If this had taken place today, would we have become another viral Internet story? I can see it now: “Brave Boy Carries Disabled Girl Through Cave: There’s Hope for Humankind After All!”

With each step, I wonder whether my shoulders will pop out of their sockets. I feel like a deformity growing off Sam’s back. When we finally make it to the other side of the cave, we have to wait for my chair to arrive. Sam helps me prop myself against a wall, as person after person congratulates him.

“Dude, that was incredible,” they say. “I can’t believe you carried her that whole way.”

Sam doesn’t make a big deal out of it. Even so, I don’t want him to touch me.

I’M 24, RECENTLY DIVORCED, and finding my way through the daily tasks of living on my own. I’m leaving the grocery store with a giant tote bag on my lap where I’ve arranged the tidiest pile of grapefruits, cartons of milk and yogurt, boxes of cereal and microwave popcorn. I’m aware that the teetering tower looks precarious, and part of this ritual includes a series of breezy and bright *no thank yous* to the inevitable offers of help. Bringing someone else

into this dance would actually be more difficult than completing the task myself; and I love the feeling I get when I fill my tote, transfer it to my car, lug it into my apartment and put each item into its designated spot. I know it looks like I don’t, but really, I’ve got this.

On this particular evening, I’m almost at my car when a man the age of my dad offers to help. “Oh, no thanks!” I say. “I’ve got a whole system.” He eyes me as if I’ve just claimed I’m about to jump clear over my car. “All right,” he says, taking five steps back to lean against the car parked beside mine and crossing his arms. His eyes don’t leave me or my groceries.

I start my routine: put the tote on the floor of the driver’s side, transfer from my chair to the car, take the wheels off of my chair and throw them in the back seat, pull the frame of my wheelchair over my body and place it into the passenger seat, and, finally, lift the tote of groceries over my body to nestle in the frame of my wheelchair. A little involved, yes, but once you’ve done it 20 times, you don’t even think about it.

I try to ignore the weight of the man’s eyes on me, but I feel my hands start to shake. My temples and upper lip feel damp. His presence feels like a challenge, a threat, a bet that I’m bluffing. I’m rushing and fumbling, but I’ve gotten through all of the steps except the last one. I’m trying to pull the tote over my body, but it keeps getting stuck, and the more I pull, the more frantic I feel, the harder it is to breathe.

“Actually,” I finally say. “You’re making me really uncomfortable. Could you please stop watching me?”

Without a word, he walks to the other side of the car and stands with his back to me, still no more than 15 ft. away. I start pulling out each item from my tote and tossing it toward the passenger seat. I have to get out of here. I yank the bag up and over, slam my door shut and peel out of the parking lot. I make it through two lights before tears start pouring down my cheeks.

I’M 27, SITTING ALONE in a busy coffee shop grading freshman English papers. As a girl nears my table, I keep working, but I can see her standing within an arm’s length. I yank out one earbud and look up.

“Hi, I’m Lydia!” She beams.

“Hi, Lydia,” I say. I smile too. I’m hoping it’s the kind that says, You are intruding, but I am being patient with you.

“What’s your name?” Lydia asks.

Why would I tell you my name? I think. “Rebekah,” I say.

“Hi, Rebekah. I was sitting at that table over there and I felt God put it on my heart to pray for you. Could I pray for your healing to be able to walk?”

My head explodes with the word *No*. No. No. No. No, no, no, I do not want you to pray for my healing.

"Oh, no thanks," I say. "I don't think I'm comfortable with that." I'm feeling very proud of myself for saying no. No is a newer word in my vocabulary, and it gives me a surge of pride and guilt to use it now.

"I don't want to do anything that would make you feel uncomfortable," Lydia says. "Could I just pray a blessing over you?" I pause. I reach for my *no* word. But who says no to a blessing? I don't want to be the scowling woman in a wheelchair, raining on the parade of a smiling, optimistic do-gooder.

"O.K.," I say.

Lydia puts a hand on my shoulder; my stomach reaches for my throat. People are starting to look at us.

Lydia begins her prayer. "God, I want to pray a blessing over Rebekah this afternoon. You love her more than all the stars in the sky and more than all the sands on the beaches," Lydia says, her hand still resting on my stiff shoulder. "God, I pray that you would bring healing to Rebekah..."

Wait, healing? As in the prayer I said no to?

"Bring healing to Rebekah in whatever form she needs to be healed." Such clever maneuvering.

"Amen," she finishes.

"Thank you, Lydia. That was really kind of you," I say, loathing myself as I express gratitude for the very thing that has left me feeling so small.

Why can't I allow her to know how she has made me feel? Am I protecting her, or am I protecting myself? I stare at my reflection in the computer screen, feeling empty. Stop being dramatic, I think. A sweet girl prayed a blessing for you. It's like you're pouting about the kittens cuddling too hard. And yet, my throat tightens, and my eyes well.

"**SO HOW AM I SUPPOSED** to be helpful?" you might be asking. "Are you telling me I can't open the door for a disabled person? How do I know when someone does or doesn't want my help? What are the rules?" These inquiries remind me of the questions that come up when we talk about sexual consent. Human beings are complicated, and communication can be nuanced. "No, please don't. This is making me uncomfortable" isn't always expressed through language. You have to pay attention to the human person in front of you. What signals are they giving you? What expression do you see on their face? Even if this isn't intuitive for you, pay attention to their eyes—are they avoiding your gaze or looking toward you like they want to engage? If you really can't tell, you can ask, but if someone says, "No thank you," listen. You might get it wrong sometimes, but please don't let the discomfort of "messaging up" make you throw up your hands and leave this conversation.

This deeply felt resistance I run into every time I suggest we complicate our understanding of kindness is so consistent, I think it's worth interrogating. Why exactly are we threatened by the proposition that we loosen our grip on this type of

kindness? I have a guess based on my own firsthand experience of privilege.

When we're granted access to the world in a way that others aren't, we often feel guilty. There's a discomfort in watching another person struggle to navigate spaces that we move through with ease. We can alleviate some of that discomfort when we pull someone along. Phew! I'm not one of those regular privileged jerks. I care! But when we're focused on alleviating our own uneasiness, we're not really looking into the face of the person whose hand we've grabbed. What does the person actually need? Do you even know? Is this an individual problem to solve in the moment? Or does this individual encounter reveal a structural change that needs to be made?

Like anyone else, disabled people are both capable and in need of some help. Just as with every other human, their competence and needs are unique. You have to pay attention to understand them. If you want to be genuinely, actively "kind" to disabled people, invite them into your organizations, businesses and programs. Allow them to perform in more roles than the grateful recipient of generous philanthropists. Recruit disabled engineers and dancers and office administrators and comedians and lawyers and speakers and teachers to participate in your world, and do your best to make that world accessible to them. And if you insist on using "kindness" to describe this kind of inclusion, recognize that including disabled people is a kindness for all of us. Because listening to voices that are typically silenced brings to the table nuance, endurance, creativity, beauty, innovation and power.

I'M RUNNING ERRANDS one afternoon, wearing my favorite steel-toe logging boots with red laces. They're heavy and big and make me feel rugged and powerful. I pull up to the car-repair shop and see a man watching me pull my chair out of my car and put it together on the pavement. This setup ends with my feeling small so regularly, my prickles spike before I even process the emotions. I will myself to throw my chair together at turbo speed before he can read me as desperate and flailing.

Then I hear him. Such a simple, casual sentence. "Looks like you've got this," he says.

I look up. "Yes!" I say. "I really do."

*Taussig is the author of **Sitting Pretty: The View From My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body**, from which this essay was adapted*



‘People don’t expect athletes to really get involved in the product. **They just expect you to be a figurehead.**’

—Naomi Osaka



‘The pandemic **has been terrible for educational inequality.** We need massive investments in these communities to mitigate what’s going on.’
—Geoffrey Canada

'When people don't allow you to use your voice, **you make your own way.** I love seeing Black kids running around now with orange hair and paint on their fingernails.'
—Tyler, the Creator



AMERICA DESERVES A BLACK FUTURE

CONVERSATIONS AND ESSAYS
EXPLORING AMERICA'S
OPPRESSIVE PAST AND VISIONS
FOR A MORE EQUITABLE FUTURE

CURATED BY PHARRELL WILLIAMS

FEATURING

Kenya Barris

Jamaal Bowman

Tyree Boyd-Pates

Dr. Otis Brawley

Douglas Brooks

Geoffrey Canada

Angela Davis

Danielle Geathers

Michael Harriot

Imara Jones

Janaya Future Khan

Rep. Barbara Lee

Naomi Osaka

Yara Shahidi

Nikkolas Smith

21 Savage

Tyler, the Creator

Mikey Williams

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALEXIS FRANKLIN FOR TIME

WE DESERVE A BLACK FUTURE

BY PHARRELL WILLIAMS
WITH MICHAEL HARRIOT

ON APRIL 26, 1607, THREE SHIPS CARRYING 105 men and boys landed on the eastern shore of what would come to be called America. They called themselves “adventurers.” But they had no interest in liberty or justice, and they were not seeking religious freedom or escaping from tyranny. They were part of the Virginia Company of London, which was essentially a private-equity-funded startup that hoped to turn a profit for the stockholders in Europe’s fastest-growing international moneymaking scheme: colonialism.

Twelve years later, a 160-ton English privateer ship flying a British flag landed a few miles away. That ship, the *White Lion*, carried a product that would change everything those initial investors thought this colony could be. America became an economic superpower because that ship’s cargo opened up a market more valuable than those settlers would ever imagine. That market was for human beings, trafficked from Africa.

By 1860, Virginia would house roughly 1 of every 8 enslaved persons in America. The total value of this country’s human chattel had become the largest single financial asset in America, worth more than all of its railroads and factories combined. Virginia, along with other Southern states, decided it would rather fight what remains the bloodiest war in American history than end the torture, murder and unabashed evil of human slavery.

This is the place I call “home.”

MANY AMERICANS ASSUME that the recent conversations about systemic racism and inequality are a result of a “moment of reckoning.” But I know this conversation dates back to those first “20 and odd Negroes”—as Jamestown colonist John Rolfe wrote in a letter—who became investment property as soon as they touched the shores of this independently owned and operated franchise called America.

The rugged spot jutting out from America’s mainland that birthed this nation has since been named Virginia Beach. It birthed me too. Being raised in the literal womb of America and the origin of this country’s oppression left an indelible impression on me. I am both the promise of America and a product of its shameful past.

America was founded on a dream of a land

where all men were created equal, that contained the promise of liberty and justice for all. But *all* has never meant Black people. Like most Black Americans, I understand that *all* exists only in the augmented-reality goggles available to shareholders, power brokers and those lucky enough to get in on the initial public offering. But the ongoing protests for equity and accountability that have overtaken cities across the nation have made me feel something new that I can only describe with one word: *American*.

The desperate longing for economic justice that spurred unrest in the streets of Minneapolis after George Floyd’s murder reminds me of the same fire that burned in the veins of the Sons of Liberty when they dumped 342 chests of tea into the sea at Griffin’s Wharf. (Now we call that incident “the Boston Tea Party”—which is a poetic way to describe a “riot.”) When I see people tearing down the monuments to secessionist traitors who wanted to start their own white-supremacist nation, I see patriots acting in service of this country. It reminds me of the protesters who were inspired to tear down the statue of King George on July 9, 1776, after they heard Thomas Jefferson’s letter telling his oppressors to kick rocks. Those “thugs” would serve under the direction of George Washington in the American Revolution. But the Declaration of Independence makes it sound dignified: “In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms,” wrote our Founding Fathers. “Our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury.”

AMID SO MUCH INJURY, how do we begin to heal? Given this country’s inescapable legacy, I wondered if it was even possible to convince people that—even if we cannot escape it—we can overcome our past. But if we are ever to hold this





nation accountable, we must force it to construct a future that offers us the same opportunities for wealth, prosperity and success as the ground-floor profiteers who built an empire with our free labor. We deserve the interest earned from those Confederate dollars and the refund of our tax dollars handed out to our white brothers and sisters in the New Deal while our neighborhoods were redlined. We want the return on our investment from when our local tax dollars funded schools our children couldn't attend. We want actual liberty and justice not just for some Americans, but for all.

So, in assembling this project, I asked some of the most qualified people I know in every field—from Angela Davis to Tyler, the Creator, to Representative Barbara Lee—to talk with us, and with one another, about the way forward. I wanted to convey a vision of a future filled with the artists, creators and entrepreneurs who can fulfill the promise of this country's principles.

For more than 400 years, the only path to the American Dream was an access-restricted, privately owned road. Black Americans have never been free to harvest the fruit of America's bounty, even though we were forced to do the field work. Ensuring that every citizen has the same opportunity to succeed and flourish—regardless of class, gender or skin color—is as patriotic a principle as declaring “no taxation without representation.” It is the only way to guarantee life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The activists who tossed chests of tea into the ocean to protest economic injustice were patriots. But they were also oppressors, unwilling to extend the freedoms for which they fought to everyone. America's wealth was built on the slave labor of Black people: this is our past. To live up to America's ideals, we must trust in a Black vision of the future. □

ACTIVISM



Angela Davis

+ Yara Shahidi

On empowering young people in their activism

ACTOR AND ACTIVIST YARA SHAHIDI WAS BORN IN 2000, THREE decades after Angela Davis began wielding her platform as a UCLA professor for radical activism. But their generational gap hasn't stopped them from becoming friends or uniting in their efforts to dismantle white supremacy. The pair reconvened on Zoom to discuss the global nature of their struggle and the value of voting, regardless of ideology.

Yara Shahidi: Many people are talking about how unprecedented what we're going through is, when in reality there have been generations of precedent set. What is the importance of opening the conversation to involve many generations?

Angela Davis: It's an extraordinary moment—and when conjunctures like this happen, they happen almost serendipitously. But if we have been doing the organizing work over the decades, then we can seize the moment. At the same time, I think we're formulating questions and addressing issues in ways that ought to have happened in the immediate aftermath of slavery. We're doing today what should have been started 150 years ago.

'Voting is by no means the only means of civic engagement. **It is actively necessary to engage throughout the year** in whatever way possible.'
—Yara Shahidi

The focus has largely been on Black people. I'm glad about this. But we should also acknowledge how essential it is to understand racism against Indigenous people, and what you might call the unholy alliance of colonialism and slavery-produced, racist state violence. So that when we examine all the complex ways in which anti-Black racism expresses itself in this country, we also should look at anti-Indigenous and anti-Latinx state violence.

YS: James Baldwin talked about how one of the greatest sins of white supremacy was taking away our global language and our ability to communicate with one another, making it harder to actively disassemble these common evils and racisms. It feels like I and some of my peers have received great benefit from being in direct connection with one another on social media. At the same time, social media also has the tendency to allow us to disappear things as trends pop up and then fade. Something I'm trying to figure out is how we maintain consistent touch points and sustain conversations.

AD: Social media is very important. My experience as an organizer involves knocking on people's doors. When H. Rap Brown was in jail, we raised \$100,000 for his bail by going door-to-door in Los Angeles, largely in South Central, asking people to donate coins! That sounds prehistoric at this point.

But I think it's important to use the technology, as opposed to allowing the technology to use us. As a friend of mine pointed out years ago, how many likes you have is not necessarily an indication of the organizing work you've done.

YS: Being a part of the social-media world is often how one develops a political opinion. Do you have guidance for young people on how to develop a non-reactionary politic?

AD: It's so important to not confuse information with knowledge. We all walk around with cell phones that give us access to a vast amount of information. But that does not mean as a result that we are educated. Education relies precisely on learning the capacity to formulate questions: critical thinking. Learning how to

raise questions not only about the most complicated issues but about the seemingly simplest issues.

This is one of the reasons I find the trans movement so important. When one learns how to question the validity of the binary notion of gender, one is questioning that which has persistently been the most normal context of people's lives. The work of ideology happens in those seemingly normal spaces.

This is also why the prison-police-abolition campaign has been so important. Prisons and the police state are assumed to have been with us forever. So we begin to ask how we address issues of harm without replicating the violence: how we create safety by not resorting to the same tools of violence that are responsible for us being unsafe.

YS: I love the wording of "questioning the most simple." This summer, I was going through an African philosophy canon, and what it highlighted for me is these Eurocentric or U.S.-centric norms that have been established. For readers who are submersed in Western media, are there other texts we should be turning to to subvert these norms?

AD: I'm reading this book now that's on my desk: Françoise Vergès' *A Decolonial Feminism*. Speaking of which, I know you're passionate about feminism. I'm interested in how that passion is expressed in the social-justice work you've been doing over the last period.

YS: At first, my interest came from, "How do I interrogate my own identity?" I realized for so long that the primary prism through which I viewed most things was through being a brown and Black person in the world. It's been an ongoing process of being more honest in my experience and the ways my identities layer on top of each other. What does it look like to structure a movement strong enough to hold many of our truths in one, while still actively dismantling the lack of equity that is often tied to presenting as a woman? How has the heteronormative tradition influenced the rest of our trajectory? While I do voting work, what does that mean to know that the solutions presented to us on the ballot aren't perfect? How do I engage with

voting while engaging with this larger movement of equity in these spaces?

AD: So, how do you?

YS: The conclusion I've come to is that it is by no means the only means of civic engagement. It is actively necessary to engage throughout the year in whatever way possible—and the months of continued protests have helped nuance this conversation. There can no longer be this binary of whether to vote or not is the difference between having an equitable society and not.

AD: Or to assume there has to be a perfect candidate in order for us to participate in the electoral process. I was severely criticized when I suggested during the last election that we all needed to vote, even though the candidate was not the one we wanted. It was a difference between a candidate that would allow our movements to flourish, which would also include being extremely critical of that candidate once she was elected to office—or be faced with the alternative we have experienced. I'm someone who historically has not been excited at all about the electoral arena. I was excited only to the extent I knew how important achieving the right to vote was, because I myself wasn't able to register in my home state of Alabama when I first attempted to. Now, and I hope I haven't gotten less radical in my framework, but I think that we vote for our own capacity to continue to do the work that will bring about change. Every major change in this country has been a consequence of a kind of collective imagination. So we have to ask, Will this candidate enable that kind of arena or shut it down? In a sense, when we vote, we're either voting for ourselves or against ourselves.

YS: I love the term *imagination*. One of the strategies of white supremacy is to take away the potential of the Black imaginary. We're in a moment right now of world building—a world not based on precedent, or even in reaction to the systems that have been set up, but truly independent, based on values of equity. So I view this election as an opportunity to reclaim our space for imagination.
—Moderated by ANDREW R. CHOW



Geoffrey Canada

+ Tyree Boyd-Pates

On teaching American history to reckon with the realities of the past

GEOFFREY CANADA AND TYREE BOYD-PATES BOTH KNOW that American education is deeply flawed—and they’ve each spent their careers working to correct different facets of it. Canada, an elder statesman of education policy, is the longtime president of the Harlem Children’s Zone, which has provided holistic support to dozens of thousands of underserved students. The millennial Boyd-Pates has curated exhibits with a focus on untold Black history, and this summer he distributed an antiracist tool kit called the Freedom Papers. They met on Zoom to talk about America’s dark history and the potentially catastrophic effects of the pandemic on education.

Geoffrey Canada: Tyree, I have a preamble before I ask a question. This is something that frustrates me so much when I’m talking to people about the condition of African Americans: they think of slavery as such ancient history—like, “Didn’t you get over that?” But it was just a blink of the eye in which I can reach back in history and touch that period. Through my grandmother, I have talked to a person who talked to an enslaved person.

*If we want America to fully live up to its ideas, **we have to tell an unapologetic interpretation of American history**, told from those who were on the ground to experience it.*
—Tyree Boyd-Pates

Since then, so many forces have been working against us: President Hayes pulling the troops out of the South after Reconstruction, the slaughter and the absolute reign of terror that continued right through when I was born in 1952. And policies like the GI Bill, which built the white middle class by giving out free college and low-interest mortgages—but African Americans couldn't get any loans for houses. In New York and northern New Jersey, there were 67,000 mortgages insured by the GI Bill—but less than 100 for nonwhite people. All of this Black history shaped my life and helped me do what I ended up doing. Did similar forces help shape you?

Tyree Boyd-Pates: Completely. I was raised by my grandmother, who was knee-deep in political education. But it wasn't until college, when I was in the townships of South Africa, that all of what she taught me in low-income Los Angeles clicked, because I saw the same generational poverty and the afterlife of apartheid there.

It let me know the ways in which white supremacy constantly works cyclically in creating and causing violence toward communities of color. And it made me want to study and bring back what I didn't have in my own K-12 education to my neighborhood. What was your K-12 education like?

GC: I grew up in the South Bronx in the late '50s, when I could see the social fabric fraying. In elementary school, all of the kids were tracked. If you were in Track 1, you were smart; if you were in Track 5, we assumed that you were dumb. But these kids in the lower tracks, they were my friends: I knew there was nothing wrong with them. I asked myself, "Why are they stuck in these classrooms where everyone decided by age 10 or 11 that their life was basically over?"

It was written by the education system that you weren't going to make it. One of the end results of this is that at the age of 68, only one of my friends I grew up with is still alive. No one else. If they didn't die early, they died in their 50s, and a few made it to their 60s. Now they're all gone. I could see this coming when I was in elementary school.

The only reason I'm here today was I caught a break that lots of other folks didn't catch. That still haunts me, when I think about the thousands of lives lost because the system failed them.

TBP: Yes. There's this myth of Black male exceptionalism. But for every one Geoff or Tyree, there's nine other Geoffs and Tyrees who never make it to the platform you and I have. It's our duty to bring those who got locked out of opportunity toward the spaces they deserve to sit in.

GC: Did you see *Hidden Figures*? I was in high school when that was happening. It would have changed all our lives if we had been told that Black women were so smart, they were the only ones who could get a rocket to outer space and back! There are probably 200,000 Black scientists who don't exist today because they denied that to us.

TBP: This discussion reminds me of Carter G. Woodson's ideas about "The Mis-Education of the Negro." The idea that Black folks don't know their history, and without knowledge of self, they're going to be in a perpetual cycle of dysfunction and destruction.

But whenever I revisit Carter G.'s work, it also reminds me that as mis-educated as Black folks are, so are white folks. They are so deeply as mis-educated about us and themselves as we are. The inherent flaws of American education have made me wonder if there's a further discussion to be had about why it's working the way it is—and if it's designed to work that way.

GC: Last month, everyone I knew who was white came up to me saying, "I never heard of Juneteenth! There was a Black Wall Street?" These were educated, smart people, stunned that somehow this was denied in their education.

People are taught a certain view of American history: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, everything was good. Based on what you've seen, is America ready for real history: to talk about the Trail of Tears, the smallpox blankets, what happened after Reconstruction?

TBP: It's overdue. If we want America to fully live up to its ideas, we have to

tell an unapologetic interpretation of American history, told from those who were on the ground to experience it. We shouldn't run away or hide from the darker parts of it.

America's future is predicated on knowing the full history about herself. We need to move away from a Euro-centric lens and toward a culturally centric lens. But we also need to create favorable environments for education, which is the work you've been doing for years.

GC: It took me decades before I realized we needed something so encompassing that no one would want to do it: to re-create what we call middle-class environments for poor people. People would say, "We can't afford to do that!" But I'm like, "Wait. We did that already. We built a middle class for whites. We got them homes and free college. Why shouldn't we think we can afford to do that for a people who have been systematically denied opportunities?"

But I couldn't say it out loud, because that would turn people off. Raising the money to do it without saying that's what we were trying to do took some time to work out. But now, at our Promise Academy schools, we've eliminated the white-Black achievement gap. There's nothing magical about this.

The pandemic we're in right now has been terrible for educational inequality. Think about what our kids are going through: Whose parents are the ones getting sick? Whose communities are most of the people dying in? Where are the places kids don't have the technology to be online?

It's all in Black, brown, Latinx communities. We're sowing the seeds of the next disparity in education right now. I've been yelling at people: We need massive investments in these communities to mitigate what's going on right now, so that in five years from now we're not trying to figure out why our kids aren't going to school.

I keep challenging America: If we can do it and if you care about these children, why aren't we ensuring that is happening at scale across this country? That's the next part of the work.

—Moderated by ANDREW R. CHOW

□

Barbara Lee

+ Jamaal Bowman

On upending systemic oppression through public policy



*'You can't start in the middle when you're trying to pass a policy. **You have to be thinking strategically about where you want to go to make systemic change.***

—Barbara Lee

WHEN JAMAAL BOWMAN WON HIS June primary to represent parts of the Bronx and Westchester County in Congress, he became the latest young progressive whose election shook up Washington, D.C. But that new wave—whose most prominent member is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez—is following in the footsteps of many elder leaders. Longtime Representative Barbara Lee has been a force on Capitol Hill for decades, first as a staffer and now as a member of Congress representing California's Bay Area. Lee, who's now in her 12th term, is one of the body's most outspoken progressive lawmakers. The two met on Zoom to discuss the rising influence of American progressives and how public policy can fight systemic oppression.

Jamaal Bowman: We've had many conversations since I won the [primary], so I want to thank you first and foremost for opening your doors and being supportive of me as I'm learning the ropes. Can you speak about how you survived in Washington for over two decades as a progressive Black woman?

Barbara Lee: First of all, let me just congratulate you once again. You're going to hit the ground running. I started, actually, in the mid-'70s, when I got involved in politics through the Honorable Shirley Chisholm. I learned a lot from her because she was the first African-American woman elected to Congress. It was like you would not believe—talk about sexist and racist. But she held her head up and she was brilliant, and she moved her agenda and represented her constituents in a magnificent way. These individuals were fighting for what we're still fighting for: systemic change. And so they challenged the racist system. They challenged the system of inequality. In terms of capitalism, in terms of economic inequality, they challenged it all at the core.

And so fast-forward to today; for me, this is normal. You can't start in the middle when you're trying to pass a policy. You have to be thinking strategically about where you want to go to make systemic change, and that's how I've been able to be myself.

JB: I feel like a member of “the squad” coming to get Barbara Lee’s back, to fight alongside her, and to strategize with her along, and the other true progressives in Congress. We’re living in a time where if we’re not bold we’re not going to survive.

BL: Jamaal, they call me the OG. I worked with the Black Panther Party, too. But this is *your* time. This is a marathon, and you’re running your lap of the race in Congress.

JB: The reason why I decided to run for office is, I was tired of our children suffering and dying in the streets. When I founded my school, we didn’t hire police to come into our schools. We focused on hiring school counselors, social workers and mental-health professionals to provide the support that our kids needed within communities that have been historically neglected. That’s the policy point right there: How do we defund and demilitarize the police and reallocate those resources for mental-health support, not just in our

schools but in our communities?

BL: My background is in mental health. I’m a psychiatric social worker by profession. What you said is just so true. Black and brown children are traumatized to their core because of the system of injustice. During the brutal snatching of children from their families at the border, I went down several times to McAllen, Texas; to El Paso; and to San Diego. I went into some of these jails and prison camps where they were holding children. The trauma that these kids face is devastating. African Americans know the generational trauma from children being taken from their parents during slavery. So it became an intersectional issue where we were fighting against this Administration for taking children from their parents, but also fighting for trauma-related care in the mental-health system.

JB: All these issues are intersectional. Immigration policy connects to the refugee crisis, which connects to what’s happening with climate and our military’s

contribution to climate change. So we need to truly center human rights in all foreign and domestic policy—truly center people over profit.

BL: The other part of the real excitement I have with you coming to Congress now is that I don’t have to explain what *intersectionality* means. The members are learning about [it], but it wasn’t until this last Congress. I had to drill down on Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined *intersectionality*. And now you’ll be there, speaking like it’s no big deal to you.

The movement for Black lives, our Dreamers, young people who hit the streets, regardless of their background, they have pushed us. We’ve made a quantum leap, and as a result of that you now hear people talking about systemic racism in Congress.

JB: There’s definitely a shift happening, but as we say in baseball, momentum is only as good as your next starting pitcher. So we got to keep the work going.

—Moderated by JUSTIN WORLAND

VIEWPOINT

21 Savage uses his platform as a Grammy-winning rapper to advocate for financial literacy

I didn’t even know how to open a bank account until I became a rapper. When I was a kid, I knew there had to be a way to understand how to make and save money—but no one was teaching me that in my Atlanta schools. It wasn’t until I had access to resources and education that I learned the extent to which a lack of financial literacy can often lead to a lot of hardships later on, and how systemic these issues are. Redlining, a discriminatory practice that denied home loans based on race or ethnicity, has left some of the largest impacts we see in the families of Black, Indigenous and people of color when it comes to intergenerational wealth and assets inequality. But in many communities, there remain a lot of myths around building wealth, and distrust of financial

institutions.

Finances are deeply connected to every area of our lives, especially when we talk about access to resources. That’s why we need to talk about finances and how they encourage or break cycles of poverty—and it’s why I started the “Bank Account” financial-literacy campaign in 2018. I want the next generation to have a head start and the knowledge on the value of making good financial decisions so they have a clear path to achieve success and financial security. In starting to learn about financial literacy early on, you develop other skills, like self-confidence, responsibility and discipline, which in turn can help facilitate a healthy transition into adulthood.

Financial literacy covers a series of topics that impact our overall realities—from being able to buy the clothes and shoes

we wear, the food we eat, the colleges we attend, the careers we pursue.

My first piece of advice is that you need to pay yourself first. Every time you get paid, put a little bit away for you so you can set yourself up for the long run. There are some people who we consider to be “givers,” who are more likely to spend all their money on others and often can forget to save for themselves. But we know that time is money—and when you leave money in the bank, it grows interest, and you’ll start to see your money work for you.

It’s also important to work with trusted financial institutions, because they allow you to save both time and money. In 2018, we partnered with Juma Ventures in Atlanta to train

young people on financial literacy, and saw that more than 80% of those we worked with opened bank accounts, established direct deposit and started to save money. Mobile banking and apps also present advantages, including 24-hour online services that provide immediate customer service, reduce stressful physical interactions and help you avoid bank fees.

Historically within BIPOC communities, there were few work opportunities from which to choose, and fewer still that were stable. Black pioneers challenged this reality by building small enterprises that supported and employed within their own communities. We need to follow their lead. Building Black-owned businesses is a powerful way to shift the narrative—and sustain wealth in our communities.



VIEWPOINT

Danielle Geathers claimed space for herself as a leader on campus



I was 12 years old when Trayvon Martin was murdered, and 13 when his murderer was acquitted. While my predominantly Black congregational church was wrought by grief and mourning, my predominantly white private school was oblivious to the murder, the protests that followed and the trial.

This type of split in American reality is nothing new to my family. My grandfathers were Black children of the Jim Crow South, attending segregated schools with hand-me-down books and dilapidated furniture. They were denied access to the public library, as it was a white-only space, and they suffered from so many other separate and unequal conditions. My grandmothers were labeled “overly ambitious” and suffered repeated attempts to smother their dreams to confine them to traditional gender roles.

Despite these obstacles, they were able to overcome these oppressive systems, graduate from college and have successful careers. Members of my family went on to titles including mayor, police chief and Democratic Party official.

Their DNA imbued me with the grit necessary to confront any obstacle that I faced—and the idea of Black women comfortably taking space in environments not designed for us was ingrained in me from birth. Growing up in Miami, whether I was a kindergartner being called the *N* word or being the butt of every joke during Black History Month, I would never allow my self-worth to be defined by the hostility of my classmates.

FROM A YOUNG AGE, my activism was nurtured by my mother’s emphasis on cultural education. I had early exposure to Alex Haley’s *Kunta Kinte*, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois and Maya Angelou. I was planted in solid ground with roots that stretched back generations.

Lifted by these pioneers, I felt comfortable claiming space for myself in predominantly white hierarchies, including becoming the team captain of an all-boys soccer team. But before long, I recognized



the greater impact I could have by including others in my efforts: forming a Black Student Union; mobilizing against culturally appropriated costumes, including Afro wigs at homecoming; and adopting the “lifting while we climb” mentality that my ancestors had espoused.

The Black Student Union at my school created the infrastructure for Black students to mobilize and actively fight against the emergence of oppressive policies. Using our collective strength, we refused to accept the casual use of the *N* word by non-Black persons, the hypersexualization of women and the countless harmful microaggressions that polluted our air.

Transforming this noxious gas to life-affirming oxygen was both challenging and exhausting. Sometimes, I miscalculated while balancing the equations and found myself pigeonholed into the “angry Black girl” trope. Still, I refused to remain quiet about the systemic racism of my environment. It became normal to explain the harm in assuming that all Black students were on full scholarships or that we were all on the basketball team.

I quickly became the face of Black

radicalism at my private school. Fostered by my introduction to Angela Davis, Stokely Carmichael and Fred Hampton, I embraced the title and the responsibility that accompanied it.

When the head of school announced that students would face consequences for kneeling during the anthem, I wrote an op-ed in the school paper. During Black History Month, I ordered a Black Lives Matter flag and went directly to the head of school to have it hung in the middle of campus. And over time, underrepresented students felt comfortable challenging our school administration and had the support to do so.

The lessons I learned in high school had taught me the power of escalation and limits of nose-to-nose negotiations. But as I continued on to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I was reminded of the shoulder-to-shoulder mentality that my grandparents had embraced. I wanted to continue to lead.

My inspiration to run for president at MIT budded from my eagerness to change the way our campus prioritized diversity without focusing on access, privilege and apathy. Caring about the importance



of diversity means so much more than simply focusing on the inequality present on campus. While campaigning, it didn't surprise me when I was asked during the debate to describe what I had done for students who aren't Black. But my track record as officer on diversity spoke for itself, and I was elected in May, becoming the first Black woman student-body president in the school's 159-year history.

Two months into my term, I have a clear vision with a checklist: We will push to remove Columbus Day from our calendar and, instead, celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day. We will also re-examine the diversity of MIT's banking relationships and investment portfolio. Additionally, we are collaborating with student leadership at Historically Black Colleges and Universities to work on joint projects.

Although there will always be someone ready to temper expectations, the rings of my history remind me of the power of perseverance combined with strategy. As the great John Lewis said, "Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble."

VIEWPOINT

Nikkolas Smith makes art to call out racial injustice and inspire change



When I watched them kill Elijah McClain, I couldn't make any art for days. It had been week after week after week of gut-wrenching stories of Black lives taken from this earth too early. I wasn't sure if I could handle another one. After seeing the way Elijah pleaded for his life while walking home from the convenience store, it was so hard for me to watch and process.

But art is therapy for me. It's not until I actually create an art piece to try to get my feelings out that I can really grieve and be at peace with the anger and sadness I have when I see these videos. Seven years ago, after Trayvon Martin's murderer was acquitted, I started my Sunday Sketch series, to pull myself

out of a dark place, while going through a divorce.

Since then, these sketches have calmed me and helped me celebrate these people's lives.

But my art didn't just help me: it started to circulate in ways that blew me away. My piece showing Martin Luther King Jr. in a hoodie went viral and provoked conversations about how we still judge people by their appearance. Representative Marc Veasey shared my portrait of Atatiana Jefferson's last moments on the House floor while arguing for police reform. Michelle Obama shared my portraits of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd on Instagram. Soon I saw them on protest signs in New Zealand and other places all over the world.

My experiences have shown me that there's a natural link between art and activism. With activism, there are so many problems and issues in the world, sometimes you wish you could just grab everybody and direct them toward solutions. Putting those issues into words isn't that easy for me.

But art innately has the ability to move people: to shout out, "This is wrong! This needs to be fixed!" in a matter of seconds. People are able to rally around even just a single image.

It's my job to get their attention and then show them how they can create some sort of positive change, whether to go out and protest or call their district attorney.

Over the past few months, I've created digital paintings of Arbery, Taylor, Floyd, and many other men and women who have been killed from police violence, and shared them on social media with calls to action. I want them to look like abstract oil paintings on canvas, but they're also typically unfinished, which is a parallel to the way they didn't get to live out their lives. With George Floyd, I have him staring at you. There's so much power in looking into someone's eyes.

A lot of my pieces are social experiments to say, "What do you feel when you see this human life?" If your first reaction is to say, "They deserved to die because ...," that says a lot about who you are. I hope my art will speak to those people who are so quick to

justify the taking of a human life, so that they think: "Wait. This person should still be on this earth. They deserved better."

Up until now, I've been creating art and advocating for Black lives from my perspective, of not wanting me to be pulled over and killed by the police. But on July 24, my wife gave birth to our son, Zion. Becoming a father has doubled and tripled my passion for wanting to make sure all of these issues are fixed. I cannot have my kid grow up in a world where he's under threat of death because of the color of his skin.

For young artists, I always try to remind them: you have a powerful tool to paint the world you want to see. Sometimes, that means painting the broken things to wake people up. Other times, it's to imagine what this world will look like once we have all of these things re-established. Because we are in a society that has devalued Black lives for centuries, we need joyful images.





Douglas Brooks

+ Dr. Otis Brawley

On how the pandemic might lead to lasting solutions for our health care disparities

DOUGLAS BROOKS SERVED AS THE HEAD OF THE WHITE HOUSE Office of National AIDS Policy during the Obama Administration as the first openly gay, HIV-positive African American to hold the job. He focused on addressing the health needs of those at higher risk of HIV infection, and is now executive director of community engagement at the biopharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences. Dr. Otis Brawley was chief medical and scientific officer of the American Cancer Society before becoming a professor of oncology at Johns Hopkins, where he oversees a research effort exploring disparities in cancer rates and outcomes. Over a Zoom call, the two discussed the systemic factors behind racial inequities in health and how COVID-19 may serve as a catalyst for addressing them.

Dr. Otis Brawley: It's a combination of racism as well as socio-economic deprivation that causes people to not do as well. It starts out at birth and involves what we eat, what our habits are, what our living conditions are, and involves prevention of disease, which I think is not stressed enough, as well as access to care to get treated once diagnosed. We have a lot of data to

'We don't need to reform health care. **We need to transform health care.** We need to change how we provide it. We need to change how we consume it.'
—Dr. Otis Brawley

show that people who are poor are going to have more high-calorie diets, and it causes increased amounts of obesity. People who are poor are not going to be able to have access to doctors for counseling about prevention of disease.

If you look at the major chronic diseases, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, they're all caused by a combination of smoking, consuming too many calories, not enough exercise and obesity. Those are the causes of cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, which are the major chronic diseases and habits that come along with poverty and with the deprivation due to racism.

Douglas Brooks: Otis, you mentioned racism. Often when we hear *racism*, we think of this as an act of one person or a group toward another. But I think we have to think about what you just described in the context of structural racism, and the way the systems are designed and affect how people have to live, work, play and pray. I read a great piece from a woman from Harvard, who was talking about, yes, the comorbidities that exacerbate COVID-19 serious illness and death are real.

But what we also have to look at is that many of these people, especially Black people, are living in overly crowded homes and buildings. They leave those overly crowded homes and buildings and get on overly crowded public transportation, go to overly crowded workplaces. We can't ignore those systemic issues that also exacerbate COVID-19 and other health disparities.

OB: When I was at the National Cancer Institute in the 1990s, we started a campaign trying to encourage people to eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables per day. The chain grocery stores that were located in the inner city carry very few fresh fruits and vegetables. They thought that people in the inner city wouldn't want to buy them—but they didn't even try to encourage people to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. To me, it's a form of systemic racism. The people who made that decision weren't thinking, "I'm going to go hurt Blacks and Latinx people." They weren't thinking that way.

But the end result was people were hurt.

DB: Leadership is important. But it's defining leadership in ways that make sense for the community. So what do I mean by that? In some places, it may absolutely be that the leader in the community is the guy who owns the barber-shop, or the leader in the community is the woman who is looking out for everybody's kids if they're going to and from school. We have to be flexible enough in our thinking to understand how we make investments in those communities in ways that are both sustainable and that are realistic.

OB: I agree with you. I think the long-term investment should also be in good schools. We need more educated people who can get engaged in the community. We don't need to reform health care. We need to transform health care. We need to change how we provide it. We need to change how we consume it.

DB: Back in April, Tony Fauci said that some of the data [on COVID-19] had started coming in around the significant disparities among Black and Latinx members of our country. And he said, Look, we're going to find a cure. We're going to end coronavirus. But once we've done that, we have to come back and look at these disparities that continue to impact the African-American community. It felt like a call to action, quite frankly. [I] reach[ed] out to Daniel Dawes, who is the new director of the Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine. So with Morehouse we are building a platform to, in real time, capture not only the COVID-19 disparities, but disparities around mental health, behavioral health, diabetes and asthma. We want to overlay these on the COVID-19 data, and then use the data with partners like academic institutions, policymakers and folks like us in the private sector, to see how we can make a difference and change the laws and policies in our country to address structural racism.

I'm a social worker by training, and the very painful aspect of subtle racism is that childhood should be spent dreaming about what one can be with zero barriers in one's mind. When a child is in a

home, in a family, where people are having to struggle and fight barriers every single day, that opportunity to dream is just not as available. You can't get change made without being able to both tell the story and show the data to make a difference.

OB: If I were health care czar, what I would try to do is make sure that every person in the United States has a health coach. This will be someone who they would meet with perhaps three or four times a year, from birth all the way through the rest of life, and be an adviser on how to stay healthy and discuss what things you need to be doing, and what habits you are starting to get into that are not good for your health. We could prevent a lot of disease.

I'm always a little bit optimistic. That's why I get up out of bed every day and keep doing this. I do think that ultimately we will get people to realize there is a problem. It may not be fixed in the next generation. But I do think we're going to get better and better.

In my field of cancer, I actually get to see the mortality rates for Blacks. For prostate, breast, lung, colorectal—all the major cancers, the mortality rates are actually going down. So I can tell you I've got data to prove we are doing good, and the disparities are lessening. But the disparities are going to be here for a long, long time.

DB: If I didn't think we could make a difference—truly make a difference—I probably couldn't pull myself out of bed. What I think is different about now is the intersection of COVID-19 that has us all at home, and watching TV. The horrific murders that everyone witnessed—good people in our country saw those movements, those actions and marches across the country. And that energy, I think it's all coming together to see these disparities. I feel more hopeful about our country writ large, but more hopeful about health care and about the economy, about racism and injustice, inequity, than I have in a very, very long time. Because I think good people just didn't know. They're not evil, hateful people. They are just people who are going about their lives and didn't know. Now they do. —Moderated by ALICE PARK

□



I still have to ask for permission to do stories about my people ... **We get five stories. Why can't we tell our stories?**
—Kenya Barris



Tyler, the Creator

+ Kenya Barris

On the importance of making art that centers different perspectives

TYLER, THE CREATOR, AND KENYA BARRIS BOTH GREW up in the same suburban area of Los Angeles. As an independent rapper and hip-hop agitator, Tyler has spent a decade creating music that pushes boundaries and buttons. As a writer, director and producer behind shows like *Black-ish* and the movie *Girls Trip*, Barris has won accolades from audiences and critics alike. Both share a desire to shape a culture where everyone can find the freedom to be themselves.

Kenya Barris: One of my security guards does security for your store Golf Wang [in L.A.]. I was looking at your tweet about Black fury after the storefront got smashed during protests. What did that mean to you? I'm sure you got the calls from your white friends: "Hey, man, just wanted to say I'm sorry."

Tyler, the Creator: My store is fixable. I don't get too attached. That was a horrible time, but it had some humor: People calling, like, "You O.K.?" It's some weird guilt

they had but a lot of good intent. I got tweets and comments from white teenagers saying, "You need to say something." I'm like, "About what?" I'm over 6 ft. I'm dark. You see these lips. These broad shoulders. How dare you tell me to say something about me?

KB: People will have an opinion about your place in this, and they've never had a place in this. I still have to ask for permission to do stories about my people. That's counterintuitive. White people get to tell [their] stories ad nauseam, however [they] choose. You get everyone from Wes Anderson to David Fincher to Spike Jonze. You get so many versions of whiteness. We get five stories: crime, slavery, the hood, "I don't have a man" and "I'm trying to get out the ghetto."

And a biopic of a hero. Why can't we tell our stories?

TTC: All everyone thinks of Los Angeles is lowriders and gang culture. I wasn't from Compton. We were running around skateboarding and wearing Supreme, getting into photography and Tim Burton. We have to let people know this is a part of L.A. too. When people don't allow you to use your voice, you make your own way. That's what I did.

KB: I grew up skating too. But we're not monolithic.

TTC: I love seeing Black kids running around now with orange hair and paint on their fingernails. But in 2003? No.

KB: The thing you're a part of birthing is an acceptance of diversity and diversified ideas. You've helped create a lane where kids can just be themselves. It's still forming. I did a show on Netflix this year, *#blackAF*, that was the best and worst experience I had in my life.

TTC: I loved the fourth or fifth episode, with that speech Tyler Perry gave. That was one of those moments where I was like, This is what I've been feeling since I was born. When I started out at 18, the intent was to question everything that everyone was O.K. with, because everyone's different.

KB: What you did was lyrical satire. With my show, because the demographic was a little older, I don't think minds were as open. It was like, "That's not a real Black family." I'm like, "That's my family!" It's a problem that we cannot expand beyond what people are used to seeing us in. That's the whole purpose of my career—to push the conversation and the culture forward.

TTC: Everyone doesn't realize that they live in a bubble. You doing *Black-ish* and making that type of Black family was very strong. Watching *Black-ish* and seeing Junior's character—I related to that.

KB: We are constantly thinking, Keep your head down, stay out of trouble. White culture does allow free thought much more than ours. We haven't really made it until we can criticize each other. —*Moderated by* RAISA BRUNER

VIEWPOINT

Janaya Future Khan finds strength through organizing in the Black Lives Matter movement—and boxing



I used to think activism and organizing was something so specific. There's this idea that you have to be noble or special to do this work. I definitely didn't set out to become an activist.

One day in 2010, I walked into a boxing club with no additional thoughts about what it could imply or mean. It was full of queer and trans people, and women who were domestic-violence survivors. I had never been in a community like that before. I had no idea what to do with it.

But I knew boxing. So I'd go to any conference they invited me to with a smelly hockey bag full of old boxing gloves, teach people how to box and then go sit in and listen to the expertise of other people. It really gave me some of the tools to live in my own fullness, to embrace myself, my body. I realized that to accept the story I was born into would be to accept my own destruction.

Activism is about being alive: about fighting for life. Activism is being for someone else who you needed most in your most vulnerable moment. There's something inherently spiritual and supernatural about what happens when we tie our fate to another person: we discover who we are in service to others.

There are some people who might think, "This is not my fight. I don't have to do anything." But not doing something makes them an agent of a society that creates moral apathy and a selfish bewilderment. When you cling to creature comforts, that comes at the expense of our mind and spirits. The true cost of complacency is the death of the soul.

I used to operate from a place of how to get people in. Now I realize our job is not to bring in one person but to make revolution irresistible. We're building a belief system—a world outside the colonial imagination. Whiteness is built on exclusion, so Blackness must be built on something else.

It can be very threatening to see someone drop their chains and live in their fullness. That's why pronouns are scary for people: you are shaking up what people have formerly taken as immutable truths. We think that we live in a society organized around these binaries. But if there isn't just the

gender of male and female, then maybe a lot of other things in society aren't true either.

The idea of Afrofuturism is to create a world where our strength, our power, our dignity, our love is not informed by how much suffering we can endure. I know it sounds so far off. But when I think about that, I remember that somebody imagined shackles on Black wrists, and enough people believed it to make it true. Someone imagined borders; someone imagined police. We have to be the disrupters of truth in our lifetime.

And we aren't going to get anywhere unless we stand arm in arm with the Black women, which includes Black trans women. There's a reason why we struggle to fight for them: because in order to protect Black women and girls, we'd have to understand it is us they need protecting from. Black women and girls stand at the fulcrum of change or catastrophe.

The fear never leaves. But in organizing, like in boxing, you have to learn to become bigger than the fear that lives in you. The punches don't hurt less—you just learn how to move with them. It's about adapting; it's about strategy. The first rule of boxing is to protect yourself at all times. I can't think of a better teaching for organizing and activism and for living your full life.

Fear is something that society cultivates. It creates the conditions for an anxious and voiceless people. When we rise up and become bigger than the fear that lives in us, I think anything is possible. Today I am grateful that we don't need a singular champion anymore. So many of us are in the ring; so many of us are putting on our gloves and training each other up.

I want to remind people of a time when you were younger, when you used to think you could do anything. After that, everything in society taught us to shrink. But it is not yet too late to be the person you thought you could be. If we're going to find out what we're really made of, we have to let go of the scripts we're born into. There's no other reason for us to be in the world than to live remarkable lives. And we become remarkable when we fight for freedom, justice and liberation.



Naomi Osaka

+ Mikey Williams

On upending hierarchies for young Black athletes to create a new archetype

NAOMI OSAKA IS ONE OF THE TOP TENNIS PLAYERS IN THE world, having won two Grand Slam titles in the past three years. Mikey Williams, a rising high school sophomore, is one of the top-ranked basketball prospects in the country and made waves recently for expressing an interest in attending a historically Black college or university (HBCU), as opposed to a traditional NCAA powerhouse. They met on Zoom to discuss being shaped by the protests this year and their long-term goals off the court.

Mikey Williams: You beat your favorite tennis player, Serena Williams. I'm not in that position yet—to where I can compete against the players I look up to. How did it feel?

Naomi Osaka: It feels really crazy because you grow up watching them. Just for them to be seeing you as an opponent is very surreal. I feel like I dreamed of the moment—and for it to happen in real life was definitely an out-of-body experience.

Whatever sport you play, you're compared to the person that's most similar to you—and for me it was always Serena.

'A lot of people think they have to go to Duke, Kentucky or UCLA. But if certain players take the HBCU route, it can change sports forever.'

—Mikey Williams

VIEWPOINT



**Imara Jones
shines a
light on the
visionary
work of Black
trans women**

Trans people are not new. As long as there's been recorded human history, we have always been here. The problem is that we have been erased from the human story, and that erasure leads to a society for Black trans women where everything is failing us: we experience epidemic levels of violence, mass levels of unemployment and lack of access to education.

There cannot be a Black Lives Matter movement worthy of the name until we center Black trans women. However, we are not waiting on others to save us. When society fails you, you are forced to reimagine what it would look like if freedom truly existed. This is why Black trans women are among the most visionary and progressive leaders within social-justice movements. That's been true since Marsha P. Johnson, a leader of the Stonewall uprising, who understood the link between Black civil rights, women's rights, gay rights and trans rights. That approach continues to this day with so many Black trans women leading radical efforts, including Toni-Michelle Williams, who is helping to reimagine a world without incarceration; Ianne Fields Stewart, who is fighting food insecurity; and Micky B at the Transgender Law Center, who is coordinating a project reimagining Black trans liberation and life across every spectrum. That's why the future is trans. Trans people, through our existence, show the power and resilience that we all need to create a better world. We are creating a future where we get to be who we actually are rather than how others define us—where immutable gender roles are a thing of the past and where we are defined not by what we can consume but by what we can create.

I want to be a good enough player to stand on my own. I want to carve my own legacy.

MW: Someone I've always looked up to is LeBron James: I used to wear his jersey. After me and his son Bronny started playing together, I got to know him—and it's dope I can now take notes from him in different ways. How he handles himself off the court is huge for me: he created a school, has all these foundations and is speaking up against injustice. Did the protests this summer inspire you to become more outspoken about inequality?

NO: Personally, because of COVID and the quarantine, I was able to stay in one place for the longest amount of time I have in my life. But I actually flew to Minneapolis with my boyfriend, and we saw everything. That was a life-changing moment. I think athletes are scared of losing sponsors whenever they speak out. For me, that was really true, because most of my sponsors are Japanese. They probably have no idea what I'm talking about, and they might have been upset. But there comes a time where you feel like you gotta speak on what's right and what's important.

MW: Yeah. As young athletes, we're being controlled a lot. But last month, I cut down my list of colleges I want to attend down to five HBCUs and five PWIs [predominantly white institutions]. I hope I can make a change in college sports. A lot of people think they have to go to Duke, Kentucky or UCLA to get to where they want to go.

I don't have anything against those schools or coaches. But we don't realize that the only reason we look at those schools is because we're the ones going. If certain players take the HBCU route, it can change sports forever.

NO: The day you posted that, my boyfriend showed it to me, and he was so excited. You definitely made an impact.

MW: What is it like representing Blackness on an international scale?

NO: Because tennis is a majority-white sport, I do feel like I'm a representative—and because of that, I feel like I shouldn't lose, sometimes. But it's a very big source of pride. I feel like it gives me a lot of power, and I always feel more welcomed in certain cities.

MW: We're young Black athletes. We have spotlights on us. I want to be that role model for somebody. Hopefully I'm going to be fortunate to do things like build schools, help out kids in need and put more people on to HBCUs. It's really important we understand our power.

NO: I want to keep growing and not just be referred to as "the tennis player." Hopefully I'll be able to do some more cool things in the future.

MW: Do you have any advice for becoming an entrepreneur as an athlete?

NO: I feel like I'm still learning a lot. Thankfully, I learned for a short while from Kobe [Bryant]. But everything that you're interested in is an opportunity, and there's no such thing as a stupid question when you're in meetings. Most of the time, people don't expect athletes to really get involved in the product. They just expect you to be a figurehead. But the newer generation is really becoming involved, trying to be investors.

MW: I think it's dope. Living in this world right now is all about creativity. Instagram and YouTube are huge: I see a lot of athletes doing it. But NCAA currently has restrictions on student athletes getting paid, so I think it's helpful that the NBA did put in that G League option [to allow players to skip college and join a developmental league]. Now you can have a backup, or you can multitask: you can play in the league and be an influencer on top of that and get paid a different way. Do you have any general advice for young athletes?

NO: There's gonna be times it gets really hard. But what makes you a champion is how you push through those moments. As long as you keep going, at the end of the day, you'll be proud of what you did.
—Moderated by ANDREW R. CHOW



AWESOME LEVEL



RIDE TO SCHOOL



RIDE TO SCHOOL

Give them the everyday awesome of



Time Off

A woman wearing a black hat and a bright yellow shirt is shown in a close-up, slightly blurred photograph. She is looking down and to the right with a slight smile. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white.

SECRET STORYTELLER
The author known as Elena Ferrante (not pictured here, or anywhere) returns with a new novel

INSIDE

TELEVISION MOVES DEEPER
INTO ANOTHER SPACE AGE

AN OLD SOUL FINDS A NEW
HOME IN LINGUA FRANCA

WHAT LIVE MUSIC LOOKS LIKE
IN THE AGE OF CORONAVIRUS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIZAVETA PORODINA FOR TIME

Time Off is reported by Mariah Espada

BOOKS

Learning to love and to lie

By Belinda Luscombe

MISTAKES, IN ELENA FERRANTE'S new novel, are like prized family jewels, handed down from one generation to another. Both tend to cause strife and reveal weaknesses, but they're also very hard to let go of. In *The Lying Life of Adults*, the latest work from the Italian author to be translated into English, Ferrante builds on the coming-of-age themes of her venerated Neapolitan series: the ferocious inner lives of young women, and how the things they inherit—be they beauty, brains or bracelets—are both a blessing and a curse.

The first of the Neapolitan quartet, *My Brilliant Friend*, thrust Ferrante into the limelight 28 years into her career. An unlikely sensation even before it was published in English in 2012, the book generated a rare appetite for translated literary fiction. It was swiftly followed by three sequels—all set against the backdrop of postwar Italy—and, in 2018, an HBO series. Recently, Netflix announced plans for a series based on *The Lying Life of Adults*.

Through all her success, Ferrante has hidden her true identity, with English-language media often relying on translator Ann Goldstein to speak about the books. Several theories have arisen as to who might be behind the nom de plume—including that she is actually a man (which she has denounced as sexist)—but none have so far been confirmed by the author. Anonymity in an age when nearly everyone carries a camera at all times is so unusual that the decision to remain unidentified has become part of the old-world appeal of her work. At the same time, the choice feels hyper-modern: it offers her the security to write about unpalatable realities, to explore the less civilized underbelly of the human psyche and especially to unpack the darker regions of female hearts. Precisely because of her obfuscation, Ferrante can tell the truth without fear.

THE WAY STORIES ARE TOLD to hide or highlight certain details—skills Ferrante has surely picked up in her own life—is at the heart of *The Lying Lives of Adults*. Giovanna, whose adolescence is tracked in the three or so years of the book's arc, telegraphs what kind of narrator she is going to be at the outset. “Two years before leaving home,” the story opens, “my father said to my mother that I was very ugly.” Of course, it is soon revealed that that was not exactly what he said, and that he apologizes profusely afterward, and that although he



**Puberty stinks,
and it stinks
worse in a
disintegrating
family**

is an imperfect human, he is not such a terrible father. But to a 13-year-old girl, those are less important details than the emotion her father raises in her.

As all adolescents inevitably do, Giovanna discovers that her accomplished teacher parents aren't quite as flawless as her first dozen years of experience have suggested, nor are all their

stories true. Maybe her parents' marriage isn't completely idyllic, maybe her father's estranged family wasn't that bad, maybe not all people—even those as highly educated as her father—can be swung by the power of reason. Maybe sex is not simply a physical act. Maybe there is a God.

Giovanna's first inkling that her parents might not be reliable sources arrives when she meets the object of her father's deepest revulsion, his sister Vittoria. A single woman living in the beaten-down apartment where the siblings grew up, Vittoria has not extricated herself, as Giovanna's father has, from either the social or physical lower echelons of Naples. To get to her aunt's house, our narrator literally has to go downhill. Giovanna's father conjured Vittoria's face when he insulted his daughter, a comparison so terrifying to the girl that it inflames her entire sense of self. But when she finally meets her aunt, she's fascinated. "Vittoria seemed to me to have a beauty so unbearable," she explains, "that to consider her ugly became a necessity." Emerging from a childhood governed by the detached rationality of her father, the teenager is ignited by Vittoria's passionate candor. She follows her long-lost family member into a captivating world where feelings are what matter most.

TO A U.S. READER, the divisions that rend Giovanna's elders may feel reminiscent of the widening gulf that divides the U.S., with one side accusing the other of being lowlifes who don't know the truth and the other retorting that at least they're not elitists who hide it. Navigating the politics of her own circle, Giovanna changes her allegiance based on what serves her in the moment. She proves neither a loyal daughter to her parents nor a fully obedient spy to her aunt—that is, she learns to lie like an adult.

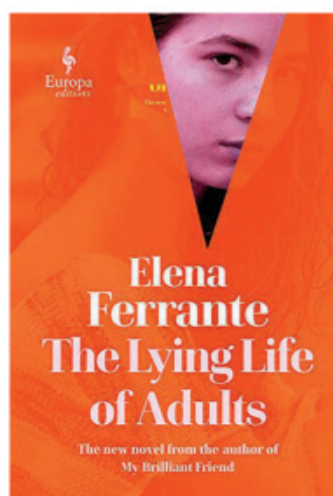
The shoals of brutality that live beneath the surface of outwardly civilized people are familiar territory for fans of Ferrante. The Neapolitan series traced

the lives of two friends, Lina and Lenú, and their sometimes destructive relationships and ruthless interactions. If the Neapolitan novels represented the span of late 20th century womanhood, *The Lying Life of Adults* takes a magnifying glass to the difficult patch of terrain that girls have to negotiate when they move, as the old sex-education movies like to put it, from girl to woman.

Ferrante sugarcoats little of this rite of passage. Even such romance-infused interludes as first love and sexual discovery are dark experiences. Giovanna undergoes a period of self-loathing so deep that she experiences "a very violent need for degradation," she says, "a fearless degradation, a yearning to feel heroically vile." Her first sexual experiences disgust her, yet she seeks more; she pursues young men to whom she is not attracted and describes falling in love as a "violent pain in my chest." Puberty stinks, and it stinks worse in a disintegrating family.

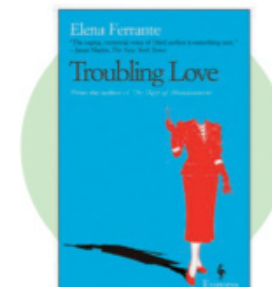
Although set in the early 1990s, the novel does not feel contemporary. The young characters' lack of political awareness and digital devices evokes nostalgia for an extinct type of less mediated childhood. But it has a timeless quality—the turmoil, judgment and bewildering choices that girls face as their bodies morph and their minds begin to explore independent thought are eternal. It's a coming-of-age novel, yes, but not for those who are coming of age. Ferrante raises a periscope into the ferocious inner workings of adolescent

minds and spirits as they discover that the human body, "agitated by the life that writhes within, consuming it, does stupid things that it shouldn't do." If there is a moral for the type of educated readers represented perhaps by Giovanna's parents, it is this: adults cannot sculpt how their children turn out, no matter how diligently they work at it. They can just watch them, worry about them—and be careful how they talk about their sisters around them. □



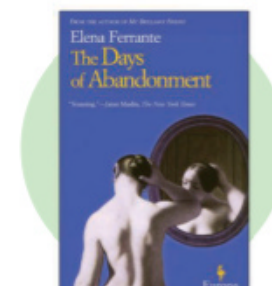
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Ferrante's first book since her blockbuster Neapolitan novels will be a Netflix series

ALSO BY FERRANTE



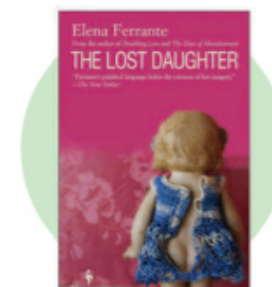
TROUBLING LOVE

In the wake of her mother's sudden death, Delia returns home and confronts the ghosts in her family's past.



THE DAYS OF ABANDONMENT

Olga descends into destruction when her husband leaves her for a younger woman.



THE LOST DAUGHTER

After her daughters move out, Leda takes a holiday that unexpectedly unravels her feelings on motherhood.



THE BEACH AT NIGHT

Ferrante's picture book brings her haunting emotional themes to the story of an abandoned doll named Celina. —Cady Lang



REVIEW

In Netflix's latest space epic, Mom needs Mars

By Judy Berman

SPACE: IT MAY BE THE FINAL FRONTIER, BUT IT'S NOT exactly terra incognita for television. The mother of all outer-space shows, *Star Trek*, emerged out of the same space-race-obsessed 1960s pop culture that nurtured *Doctor Who*, *2001: A Space Odyssey* and David Bowie's "Space Oddity." Like many of its contemporaries, Gene Roddenberry's series framed space exploration as the pinnacle of human achievement—a perilous, disorienting step into the unknown for his gallant characters, perhaps, but inarguably a giant leap for mankind.

Now, as billionaire-backed ventures transform galactic travel into big business, space shows are once again all over TV. This time, they're a bit different. Many are workplace comedies, like *Avenue 5* and *Space Force*. Serious takes tend to be dark, beaming up earthly themes such as exploitation (*The Expanse*) and failure (*For All Mankind*). Even the *Star Trek* franchise, diluted by too many CBS All Access spin-offs, has grown nostalgic (*Picard*) and self-critical (*Discovery*). Closer to the earnest spirit of its predecessors yet fueled by the fraught relationships that tether astronauts to home is *Away*, a Netflix drama from executive producer Jason Katims (*Parenthood*, *Friday Night Lights*), creator Andrew Hinderaker (*Penny Dreadful*) and showrunner Jessica Goldberg (*The Path*) that imagines the first voyage to Mars.

Hulu's *The First* tried a similar premise a few years ago, but unlike that show, *Away* quickly gets its rocket off the ground. At the helm is brave, selfless American astronaut Emma, played by the reliably tough-yet-tender Hilary Swank. She leaves behind a NASA-engineer husband (Josh Charles)



Swank can't leave it all behind in *Away*

with a medical condition that has kept him earthbound and a teenage daughter (Talitha Bateman) who's convinced her parents care more about Mars than they do about her. The international crew—representing China, Russia, Britain and India—is fleshed out in flashbacks to their defining moments on Earth. These formative traumas, which motivate the characters' extraordinary careers and haunt them as they hurtle toward the Red Planet, are fairly generic: infidelity, grief, family strife, identity struggles.

AWAY IS MORE emotional drama than sci-fi adventure, and that's no surprise: Katims is known for tearjerkers. In the past, distinctive characters have helped his projects avoid the mawkish, emotionally manipulative territory of *This Is Us* and its ilk. Sadly, this time, despite strong acting, convincing production design and propulsive storytelling, the weepy stuff often feels contrived. Emma's "woman trying to have it all, astronaut edition" plot verges on insulting. And episodes stuffed with life-or-death dilemmas, terrestrial flashbacks and workplace as well as familial discord on Earth result in underwritten characters whose bleak backstories stand in for personalities. The exception—one that speaks to the value of specificity—is Mark Ivanir's melancholy Misha, a Russian cosmonaut who logged so much time in space, he lost his place on Earth.

It's a shame, because an astronaut show that blended old-school heroism and new-school darkness with Katims' signature poignancy could've brought balance to a genre born out of space-age optimism but embittered by the cataclysms of the 21st century. Whether they're political epics or futuristic farces, the best of the new space series understand that when earthlings blast off into the wild blue yonder, we drag our dysfunction along with us. Beyond capturing the glory and terror of going where no one has gone before, they suggest that humans might pose a greater threat to the universe than it does to us.

'Cultures cannot remain static; they evolve or decline. They explore or expire.'

BUZZ ALDRIN,
in the *Albuquerque Tribune*, 1999

AWAY comes to Netflix on Sept. 4



Patel, right, goes globetrotting

REVIEW

Patel meets world

Streaming services seem to love sending gregarious famous guys on international quests for knowledge. Netflix has *Down to Earth With Zac Efron*. Disney+ has *The World According to Jeff Goldblum*. In Amazon's *This Giant Beast That Is the Global Economy*, Kal Penn taps rubber trees in Thailand and learns to launder money in Cyprus. These shows combine podcast-style infotainment with the glamour of globetrotting—nice work for the host who can get it.

Viewers aren't necessarily clamoring for this stuff, but Ravi Patel's *Pursuit of Happiness* is more engaging than most. The four-part series follows actor and director Patel's quest for insight into big issues that touch his life: parenting in Japan, work-life balance in Korea, immigration in Denmark. A premiere that brings him and his parents (whose delightful marriage is the centerpiece of his 2014 doc *Meet the Patels*) to Mexico is the highlight, for its frank yet tender talk about aging and mortality. The episodes don't quite add up to a cohesive whole, but Patel's appealing honesty about his anxieties suggests that a tight premise is less vital to this personality-driven microgenre than a true connection to the material. —J.B.

RAVI PATEL'S PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS hits HBO Max on Aug. 27

REVIEW

Settling scores in *Love Fraud*

WHY DO SO MANY WOMEN LOVE TRUE crime? Some speculate that the booming genre's female fans unconsciously seek information that will keep them safe; others figure they find it cathartic to watch their worst fears play out from a safe distance. For obvious reasons, no one is really making the case that women find crime stories uplifting.

Yet uplifting—for female viewers in particular—is indeed the way to describe Showtime's *Love Fraud*. Filmmakers Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady (*Jesus Camp*, *One of Us*) probe the case of Richard Scott Smith, a man who marries women, drains their bank accounts, then disappears. Crime fans will surely hear echoes of *Dirty John*, the hit podcast turned Bravo docudrama about a wealthy businesswoman whose Mr. Right turns out to be a violent ex-con. But while that story asks how such a savvy, successful woman could be so naive, *Love Fraud* aims to restore the dignity of Smith's victims. With the directors and a bounty hunter named Carla who seems destined to be the show's breakout star, several of them band together to take him down.

One of Smith's exes starts a blog to warn other women. Many turn out to

be capable amateur detectives. And as their stories unfold, it becomes clear that their traumatic experiences with men began long before they met Smith. In many cases, abuse, betrayal or loneliness seems to have opened them up to the overtures of a con artist posing as a nice guy. But, as Ewing and Grady take pains to demonstrate, that doesn't make them suckers or doormats. Tough-as-nails Carla is also a survivor of domestic violence. "I'll kill anyone that tries to touch me ever again," she announces—and you believe her.

As innovative in its style as it is iconoclastic in its themes, the show trades the gritty visual clichés of true crime for animated collages that juxtapose psychedelic dreamscapes with inky Gothic interiors. It's a good look for a narrative in which darkness and hope are so intimately entwined. Undaunted by the justice system's apparent indifference to crimes like Smith's, *Love Fraud* finds triumph in women's collective strength. It's a vital corrective for a genre that often underestimates its biggest fans, as well as an extremely fun ride. —J.B.

LOVE FRAUD premieres Aug. 30 on Showtime



In *Love Fraud*, the women conned by Richard Scott Smith seek justice



*Sandoval: a woman in search of a green card, and more, in **Lingua Franca***

REVIEW

In Brighton Beach, yearning to belong

By Stephanie Zacharek

SOMETIMES A MOVIE WORKS BECAUSE, in the first few minutes of watching, you realize you want the best for a character—you'll settle for nothing less. That's the allure of *Lingua Franca*, the third film from writer-director Isabel Sandoval: Sandoval stars as Olivia, an undocumented Filipina working as a live-in caretaker for the elderly, if still peppery, Olga (the late Lynn Cohen), in Brooklyn's Brighton Beach. Olivia is also a trans woman, which adds layers of complexity to her life. In the wake of Trump's hardcore anti-immigrant proclamations, she's desperate to marry a U.S. citizen so she can obtain a green card.

Olivia's mission is a practical one; she's not looking for love. Then Olga's irresponsible—though perhaps not irredeemable—grandson, Alex (Eamon Farren), moves in, igniting sparks. Olivia's caution in the face of romantic danger and her anxiety over being deported become the twin poles of her life—even as her mother frequently calls from home, looking for the

allowance that Olivia so dutifully sends.

Lingua Franca—which made a splash at the Venice Film Festival last year, the first film by a trans woman to be featured at the festival—is a gorgeous and delicate picture, an understated work that opens a window on an intimate world. Shot by Isaac Banks, it captures the lived-in luster of greater

'I feel that we don't get to choose our passions but they choose us.'

ISABEL SANDOVAL,
in an interview with
womenandhollywood.com

New York City's older, not-so-rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods. Olivia is a relative newcomer to this world, easing warily into its landscape. Yet as Sandoval plays her, she's an old soul who already belongs—she radiates luminous warmth. If Olivia has fought hard just to become *herself*, there's nothing callused about her spirit. She seeks tenderness and security in an environment that dangles those things just out of her grasp. She's asking for so little; it's enough to make you want to give her the world.

LINGUA FRANCA streams on Netflix
beginning Aug. 26

REVIEW

Teenage trauma for young and old

In troubling times, it sometimes helps to look back on even more troubling times. To that end, *Chemical Hearts*, directed by Richard Tanne (*Southside With You*) and adapted from Krystal Sutherland's young-adult novel, invites all you scarred former teenagers to relive the trauma of high school romance.

Aspiring writer and newly minted senior Henry Page (the raffishly appealing Austin Abrams) is waiting for his life to begin. Enter Grace Town (Lili Reinhart, of *Riverdale*), a bristly, brainy transfer student who walks with the aid of a cane. The two meet as Henry looks over her shoulder, reading the line from a Pablo Neruda poem she's highlighted. This highly annoying maneuver pays off, though Grace harbors a painful secret that threatens their fledgling romance.

Painful secrets, it's true, are a dime a dozen. But that doesn't keep *Chemical Hearts* from being almost embarrassingly enjoyable. If Grace and Henry can survive the perils of first love, there's got to be hope for the rest of us. Reliving all that anxiety makes adulthood look better—at least a little. —S.Z.

CHEMICAL HEARTS streams
on Amazon beginning Aug. 21



Abrams and Reinhart: Why must they be teenagers in love?

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CONCERTS

Facing the music again, with cautious enthusiasm

By Kat Moon/Taipei

WHEN DAMY LI BOUGHT A TICKET TO ATTEND the first concert of Eric Chou's 2020 How Have You Been tour in Taipei on Aug. 8, she knew she'd have to wear a mask upon entry. What she didn't know was that she'd win a lottery that got her a second one—a pink medical mask signed by the Mandopop singer-songwriter, who gave it to her onstage, a memento not just of Li's first concert but also of how fundamentally COVID-19 has changed public life.

That night, the 10,000-plus concertgoers at the Taipei Arena experienced what few have felt in nearly half a year: the energy of a packed house singing along with a beloved artist's songs. That a concert of this size—larger than any other reported on since social-distancing measures began—was taking place in Taiwan is a testament to the self-governing island's strong response to the coronavirus. Heading into the show, Taiwan, which has a population of more than 23 million, had recorded 479 cases of COVID-19 and seven deaths. In June, after no locally transmitted cases had been recorded for eight weeks, restrictions were lifted on large gatherings, including performances.

Despite the low transmission rate, the concert was marked by strict disease-prevention measures. Fans who had come to see the 25-year-old singer best known for his soulful ballads made their way through various stations set up for safety protocols. Apart from masks and temperature checks, all attendees needed to provide an ID card or a special code to help facilitate contact tracing, should the need arise.

When large-scale indoor concerts will return elsewhere hinges on the arrival of a vaccine and remains as uncertain as the trajectory of the pandemic itself. While nations experiment with the “new normal” for live music—the U.K. tested a socially distanced outdoor venue with pods of up to five—Chou's concert signaled that in Taiwan, the “old normal” might return sooner. Chou, for one, tells TIME he sorely missed interacting with fans. “I love that during the chorus, I'll just be like, *Da jia yi qi chang!*”—Mandarin for “Let's sing together!”—and then everyone joins in.

When Li accepted the autographed mask from Chou, her eyes matched the beam hidden behind her face covering. “I'm not going to wear it,” she said later. “I'll carefully keep it safe.”

‘All of this could only be experienced here, in person.’

DAMY LI,
a concertgoer who won a lottery to meet Chou onstage

1. An attendee receives a temperature check. Based on guidelines from the Taipei city government's department of health, no individual with a forehead temperature above 37.5°C (99.5°F) and ear temperature above 38°C (100.4°F) could enter the venue.



2. During rehearsal, Chou practices the opening number, “Nobody but Me.” It had been more than a year since he performed his first show at the arena. “Last year, I was just very nervous,” he says. “This year, it's a feeling more like returning home.”

3. Chou's fans—nicknamed Stars, or Xiao Xing Xing in Mandarin—reach out to make contact with the singer. Chou interacted with the crowd frequently throughout the night, borrowing phones to





6



4



5

take selfies with their owners as fans drew close to try to fit into the frame. He jogged along the stage to give high-fives and handshakes as the screams of envious onlookers swelled to fill the arena.

4. A quick glance across the crowd of thousands at any moment throughout the evening revealed nearly all of the attendees' faces covered, with only a stray mask tucked beneath a chin and the occasional nose exposed to allow for some deeper breaths.

5. By entering their names and phone numbers into a government website, concertgoers received a QR code called "myCode." The registration process was one of a long list of guidelines in a coronavirus prevention manual that the city's department of health sent to M.Star Entertainment, Chou's management company, during planning for two concerts that would take place at the Taipei Arena.

6. Chou walks on an extended stage that brings him close to fans. At the start of the event, the artist asked attendees to keep their masks on throughout the concert. "If you want to sing, you can still sing!" he said. "Don't let the masks stop you." He led the audience in an exercise to practice screaming through their face coverings: "Three, two, one!" he counted down, and more than 10,000 fans proved that their masks were no match for a crowd hungry for the transcendent experience of being collectively immersed in live music.

9 Questions

Harold L. Martin The chancellor of the nation's largest historically Black university on returning students to campus, Trump's boasting and the choice of Kamala Harris

As head of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, what was your reaction to Senator Harris, a graduate of Howard, another HBCU, as Joe Biden's running mate? Senator Harris embodies so much that is important and worthy about historically Black universities, and it is truly a historic moment to see one of our graduates included on the Democratic ticket. We join our friends at Howard in their celebration of this extraordinary development.

How have HBCUs fared under the current Administration? HBCUs have fared well in federal funding over the past three years. Title III support has increased. Eighty-five million in annual STEM funding for HBCUs was made permanent, and year-round funding for Pell Grants was approved. Passage of all of those reflect positively on the President and his Administration.

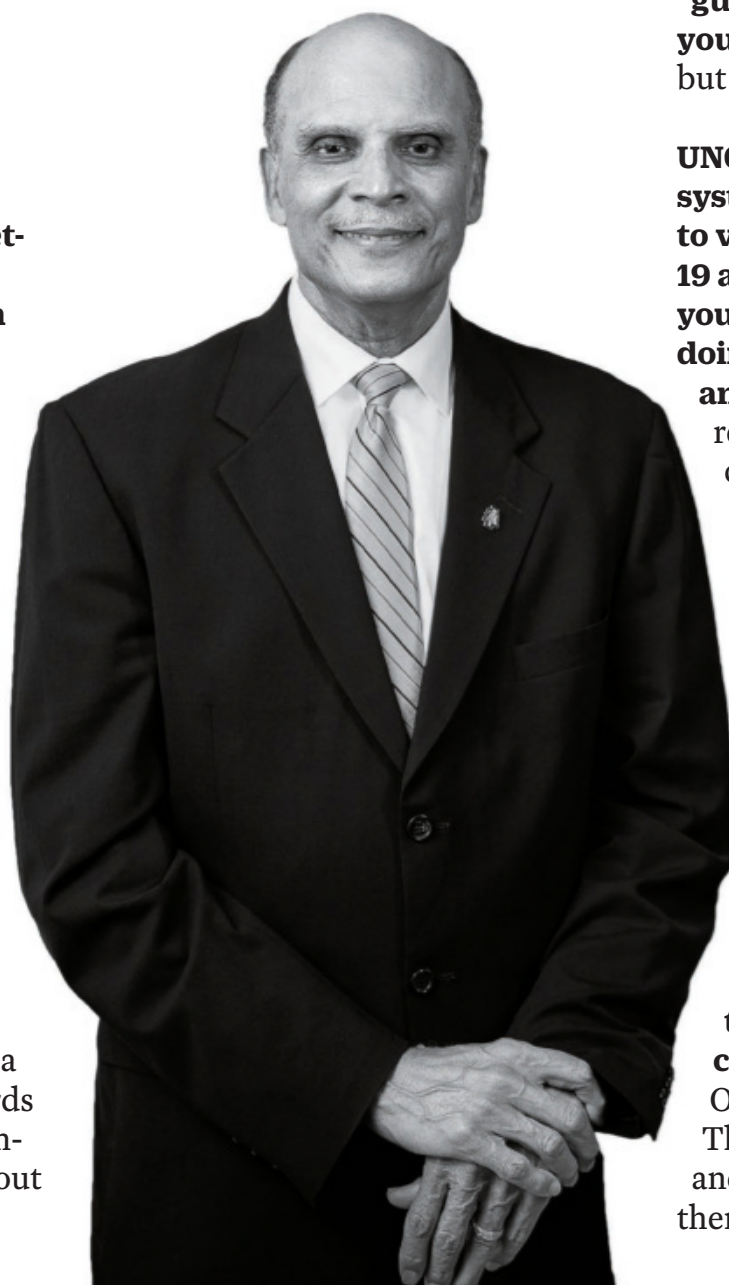
So when you see the President tweeting, "My Administration has done more for the Black community than any President since Abraham Lincoln," how do you respond to that? Well, I'm insulted, quite honestly. I'm sort of appalled by the notion that one would make such a claim.

What do you think of his leadership at a time of great social unrest in the wake of the murder of George Floyd? I think he tends to inflame situations and tends to divide vs. providing a voice that is healing for our nation on the heels of COVID-19, where there's been evidence of so many missteps by the Administration.

Yet you are optimistic? Probably as optimistic as I've been. I do feel it's in a different moment. The corporate boards I serve on, we have a very different conversation with our board members about what this means and how we must rethink the way we do business. I spend

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enormous amounts of my time engaging with our students, and I believe because of the great history and traditions of our university as an institution actively involved in social change over the decades, and because of my own experiences growing up in America, as an African-American individual, overlapping into periods of segregation and Jim Crow, my experiences tell me this feels different. This is more than just about police brutality. This is also very significantly about disparities in America that are embedded in racism through education, health care, unemployment, wealth, etc.

Students are back on campus. Despite all the safety precautions, I know recently you've felt "guarded reluctance." What is your current feeling? Guarded but comfortable.

UNC Chapel Hill, part of your same system, just abruptly moved classes to virtual after an outbreak of COVID-19 among returning students. Can you tick off some of the things you are doing to keep your students healthy and safe? All of our students who are returning to the campus have been checked for symptoms as they move into the residence hall.

What else? We obviously are requiring masking. Safe social distancing. We have a high-intensity cleansing protocol on a daily basis and a daily morning ritual of self-assessment of all students who are living in residence halls. And each of our classrooms was reduced to about 30% occupancy.

What's been the initial reaction to the health protocols, including canceling your historic homecoming? Our students are responding overall. They are 18-, 19-, 20-year-olds, though, and so we have to continue to remind them of the expectations, quite honestly.

—EBEN SHAPIRO

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